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Communication in Collaborative Interorganizational Relationships:

A Field Study of Leadership and Stakeholder Participation

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Communication in Collaborative Interorganizational Relationships:

A Field Study of Leadership and Stakeholder Participation

by

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Dedication

for Jen and Søren

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Communication in Collaborative Interorganizational Relationships:

A Field Study of Leadership and Stakeholder Participation

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The purpose of this study is to further our understanding of organizational communication in collaborative interorganizational relationships (IORs) in the nonprofit sector. The specific communication practices of leadership and stakeholder participation were investigated during a 10-month ethnographic field study, which included meeting observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Results indicate that collaborative IORs demonstrate a form of leadership that is distributed throughout the collaborative partners that mediates between common and competing interests and is sustained through communicative practices of casting vision, translating, asking, & listening. This enables collaborative IORs to foster collective action, despite the absence of formal authority structures.

Additionally, this study demonstrates the reciprocal process of stakeholder participation needed to sustain collective action in collaborative IORs. Authentic participation is both provided to collaboration members through voice and opportunity, and provided to collaborative structures by collaboration members through contribution and commitment. Furthermore, the participation of multiple stakeholders in collaborative IORs gives rise to three communicative tensions: focus/inclusion, talk/action, and sector discourse/collaborative discourse. These tensions are balance through interaction between collaboration members as the continually negotiate the social order that constitutes collaborative IORs.

Overall, these findings help us better understand the practices of human interaction that foster collaborative relationships among organizations, particularly health and human service organizations. This gives much-needed attention to the *process* of interorganizational collaboration, which complements the literature's dominant focus on antecedent conditions and outcomes. This research also draws more attention to the important social issues of communication and interaction in interorganizational collaboration, beyond the economic and resource-based theories so prevalent in past research. Theoretical implications and directions for future research are also discussed.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Interorganizational Relationships (IORs) represent a wide variety of arrangements that organizations form to develop competitive advantages (Dyer & Singh, 1998) and to create value through shared resources and knowledge (Doz & Hamel, 1998). These include trade associations, voluntary agency federations, joint ventures, joint programs, corporate-finance interlocks, and agency-sponsored linkages (Oliver, 1990). Scholars continue to recognize the importance of IORs as a growing phenomenon in contemporary society (Oliver, 1990; Provan, 1982; Ring & van de Ven, 1994; Westley & Vredenburg, 1997) and as a topic of extensive organizational research (Aldrich & Whetten, 1981, Laumann, Galaskiewicz, & Marsden, 1978; Galaskiewicz, 1985; Schermerhorn, 1975; Van de Ven, 1984; Whetten, 1981, Miller, Scott, Stage, & Birkholt, 1995; Smith, Carroll, & Ashford, 1995; Barringer & Harrison, 2000). As Oliver (1990) explains, there is "increasing acknowledgment that organizations typically operate in a relational context of environmental interconnectedness and that an organization's survival and performance often depend critically upon its linkages to other organizations" (p. 241).

The IOR literature is extensive, spanning multiple disciplines and contexts. In fact, two decades ago organizational scholars admitted that they no longer knew what they knew about IORs (Oliver, 1990). Subsequent reviews have since helped to synthesize the vast amounts of empirical and theoretical research on IORs (see Oliver, 1990; Smith et al., 1995; Barringer & Harrison, 2000). These reviews demonstrate that most of the previous research focuses on whether or not IORs are advantageous (Barringer & Harrison, 2000), and the antecedent conditions or structural properties or

IORs (Ring & van de Ven, 1994). However, little is known about other topics, such as IOR management (Barringer & Harrison, 2000), developmental processes in IORs (Ring & van de Ven, 1994), relationship facilitation of IORs (Oliver, 1990), and theoretical integration of the IOR literature (Kasouf, Celuch, & Bantham, 2006).

This is especially true regarding communication processes in IORs, and the lack of communication research represents a significant gap in the IOR literature. Within IORs, Monge, Fulk, Kalman, and Flanagin (1998) theorize organizational communication as a public good (i.e., non-excludable and jointly produced) that facilitates connectivity and communality, making organizational communication critical to the success of any IOR. Despite the fact that all IORs are partly communicative (Wigand, 1976) and that information flow is a critical IOR resource (Eisenberg, et al., 1985), Miller, et al. (1995) argue that previous IOR research does not sufficiently consider organizational communication. Isolated studies have investigated organizational communication in various IOR contexts, such as interactional strategies and discursive practices in a technology consortium (Browning, Beyer, & Shetler, 1995), dialogue and democratic voice in business-government partnerships (Zoller, 2004), cooperative norms and problem-solving confidence to resolve conflict (Kasouf, C. J., Celuch, K. G., & Bantham, J. H., 2006) communication pre-cursors in collaboration among social service providers (Scott, Lewis, & D'urso, 2005), and the role of information systems in IOR alliances (Monge, et al., 1998). However, more research is needed to understand how organizational communication processes relate to effective problem solving in IORs

(Kasouf, et al., 2006), moving beyond descriptive case studies to substantive theory development.

Collaborative IORs

Within the broader context of IOR research, an important subcategory consists of collaborative IORs. These are cooperative relationships that develop between organizations in order to leverage resources to solve problems beyond the scope of any single organization. Several definitions of collaboration exist across the literatures of multiple disciplines (see Lewis 2006 for a review), but most discuss collaborations as a coordinated process of resource sharing to achieve joint goals (Stohl & Walker, 2002; Keyton & Stallworth, 2003; Stallworth, 1998; Mohr, Fisher, & Nevin, 1996). Lawrence, Hardy, and Phillips (2002) distinguish collaborations from other forms of IORs where cooperation is purchased (like a business supplier relationship) or based on legitimate authority (such as an IOR between a government regulatory agency and an organization working within its jurisdiction). Instead, collaborations tend to be more decentralized and less hierarchical, requiring more mutual exchanges of resources. As Heide (1994) points out, this means that collaborations depend more on informal socialization processes and internal monitoring.

Communication is a vital to any IOR, especially collaborations. Lawrence, et al. (2002) suggest that collaborations involve relationships that are negotiated in ongoing *communicative* processes that don't necessarily rely on market or hierarchical methods of control. This focus on communication processes in collaboration is echoed by Ring and van de Ven (1994), who conceptualize collaborative IORs as "socially contrived

mechanisms for collective action, which are continually shaped and restructured by actions and symbolic interpretations of the parties involved" (p. 96). As such, organizational communication processes are central to the development and maintenance of collaborative IORs. This is because organizational form and communication structure are permanently connected; the way information flows and functions in an organization will always relate to the way the organization is shaped (Jablin, 1987).

Lewis' (2006) extensive review of the collaboration literature identifies three important themes of collaborative communication: identity construction, mutual exchange, and interpersonal skills. Identity construction entails the development of collaborative partners' understandings of themselves and each other through interaction. This may involve how communication constructs notions of relative power and equality (Akhavian et al., 1999) or how collaborative partners deal with issues of self-exposition through conflict (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). Collaborative communication as mutual exchange acknowledges the value of information sharing among collaborative partners. For example, Browning et al.'s (1995) study of SEMATECH (a semiconductor partnership) demonstrates the significance of proprietary information as it relates to collaborative motivations, and Iverson & McPhee (2002) show how information exchange helps facilitate the informal knowledge management structures of Communities of Practice. Finally, communication is recognized as an important interpersonal skill for successful collaboration. Communication skills such as conflict resolution (Kuhn & Poole, 2000), assertiveness (Street & Millay, 2001), face support (Jameson, 2004),

reasoning, and trust building (Lakey & Canary, 2002) all play a vital role in the development and maintenance of productive collaborative partnerships.

Although this past research provides a good starting point for understanding communication in collaborative IORs, it is a fragmented body of research that lacks an explanatory framework of specific organizational communication processes that facilitate and sustain collaborative IORs. An important next step for collaborative IOR research is to examine specific organizational communication processes in a variety or collaborative IOR contexts in order to advance theory development and increase our understanding of this important organizational dynamic.

Therefore I propose an increased focus on leadership and stakeholder participation, two such organizational communication processes that are prevalent in any IOR. The purpose of the proposed dissertation research, therefore, is to examine the communication processes of leadership and stakeholder participation in the context of collaborative IORs in order to advance our knowledge of interorganizational communication.

Leadership in Collaborative IORs

Collaborative IORs immediately raise important questions about authority and influence, especially since organizational roles are more complex in collaborations than in hierarchical and single-organization arrangements (Heide, 1994). Leadership is a critical component to collaborative IORs decision-making and strategy formation. However, collaborative IORs challenge traditional understandings of leadership that develop in single-organization and hierarchical structures. Stewart (1999) points out that

collaboration is more about influencing an organization than an individual, and Huxham and Vangen (2000) explain how the frequent ambiguity of collaborative partners can complicate the authority structure and decision-making capacity of collaborative IORs.

For example, consider how leadership would function in a collaborative IOR between various social service organizations and state agencies. Should this collaboration be led by the organization with the most authority, the organization with the most financial investment, the organization with the most expertise, or the organization doing the actual work? Should it be some combination of all four (or more)? How would authority be distributed across different organizations? How do those who lead the collaboration influence members who have obligations and loyalties to other organizations? Who is ultimately accountable for the success (or failure) of the collaboration? As one can see, it is "far from straightforward to translate mainstream theories of leadership… which presume both a formal leader-follower relationship and some specified goals that the leader sets out to achieve, into the collaborative setting" (Vangen & Huxham, 2003, p. 63).

Despite its numerous definitions and applications, the concept of leadership is generally understood as a process of influencing people towards goal achievement (Bass, 1990; Yukl, 1994), involving some form of power and legitimate authority (Fernandez, 1991). Additionally, there is a fundamental connection between leadership and communication (Thayer, 1988) and leadership and organizations (Cyert, 1990; Weick, 1978). Early work on leadership focused on the individual traits of leaders (Stodgill, 1948, 1974), situational factors (Fiedler, 1967, 1978; House & Mitchell, 1974; Hersey &

Blanchard, 1972; Graen & Scandura, 1987), and leadership styles (Katz, Maccoby, Gurin, & Floor, 1951; Stogdill & Coons, 1957; McGregor, 1960; Blake and Mouton, 1964, 1978, 1985). However, these traditional leadership perspectives have been criticized for their inability to account for changes in contemporary workplaces, particularly new models of interdependence and coordination that require more distributed practices, and that early leadership theories tend to prescribe, rather than describe, organizational relationships and processes (Gronn, 2002).

This has given rise to a number of alternative leadership theories that see power and influence as shared across organizational members (Pearce & Conger, 2003) and recognize that leadership has "symbolic consequences" for any organized social system because it shapes "an organization's dominant strategic frame or interpretive scheme" (Denis, Lamothe, & Langley, 2001, p. 811). From this perspective, leadership is inherent in the relationships among organizational members, not in the individual members themselves (Fernandez, 1991). There is also growing recognition that leadership is much more about persuasion and framing, instead of reason and rationality (see Fairhurst, 2007). All this makes collaborative IORs an excellent environment for the development of leadership communication research. Collaborative IORs represent an alternative organizational configuration that differs from the hierarchical or single organizational structures that provide the context for most of the conventional leadership research.

As Yammarino, Dansereau, and Kennedy (2001) point out, leadership is both group-based and system wide; a multi-level phenomenon that can be viewed from multiple perspectives. Collaborative IORs provide an organizational context with various

multi-level interactions, both within and across multiple organizations. They also raise important questions about the nature of leadership that will advance knowledge in this area, such as the locus of leadership and the communication practices involved in collaboration leadership. As such, leadership is an important communication process in collaborative IORs and more research into this phenomenon will yield important insights for organizational communication scholarship.

Stakeholder Participation in Collaborative IORs

Vangen and Huxham (2003) point out that collaboration research often emphasizes the participation of various stakeholders. A stakeholder is generally understood as any legitimate constituency or group that can affect or is affected by organizational activity (Freeman, 1984). Collaborative IORs inherently involves the participation and involvement of multiple organizational stakeholders in a variety of task and social processes. What makes a stakeholder perspective attractive to organizational communication is that it "brings to the forefront of our attention the relational nature of organizational life, helping us to acknowledge the different kinds of relationships and the stakes on which those relationships are based" (Antonacopoulou & Meric, 2005, p. 30). A stakeholder perspective gives insight into the complexity of organizational relationships and the interactions that constitute these connections.

Participation refers to a special case of organizational communication (Stohl & Cheney, 2001) where influence in organizations is shared among people who occupy different hierarchical positions (Locke & Schweiger, 1979). It involves interaction with several people throughout an organizational structure, especially key decision makers

(Marshall & Stohl, 1993). Participation is closely related to other concepts in the organizational communication literature, such as workplace democracy (Cheney, 1995, Cheney et al., 1998) and employee involvement (Cotton, 1993), although there are slight differences. Workplace democracy usually refers to on overall organizational philosophy or ideal, whereas participation could be one of many practices that characterize a democratic workplace. Employee involvement tends to imply a managerial tactic based on an instrumental view of organizations that privileges effectiveness and productivity (Fairhurst & Wendt, 1993), using participation as part of that larger strategy. In general, participation is recognized as the communication practices and interactions that produce cooperative associations (Stohl, 1995).

Participation is an important aspect of today's organizational environment, especially as organizations shift from classic, top-down hierarchies to flatter, horizontal organization structures that require the involvement of multiple people at multiple levels. This is relevant to collaborative IORs, which are inherently participatory structures that necessitate the involvement of many stakeholders and groups of stakeholders who have stakes in the products and processes of the collaborative partnership. Thus, collaborative IORs are essentially a representation of stakeholders who participate in joint decision-making and organizational outcomes.

Unfortunately, many disciplines outside of communication continue to see participation as a static variable (participation/non participation) instead of a "dynamic, interactive process" (Marshall & Stohl, 1993, p. 137). Organizational communication scholarship has made strides to change this tendency by demonstrating the complex

social processes that entail participation and how specific communication variables influence these practices. In order to do this, more research needs to start with the assumption that participation is a social process with communication at the center. This will help uncover the complex patterns of interaction that shape participation and allow theory development from an organizational communication perspective.

The most studied outcomes regarding participation are worker/employee satisfaction and group productivity (Seibold & Shea, 2001), though the results of these studies are mixed. Meta-analyses of the participation literature indicates that participation has little, if any, effect on productivity and a marginal influence on satisfaction (Locke and Schwieger, 1979; Miller and Monge, 1986). Yet scholars continue to extol the values of joint decision-making and participatory processes (Deetz, 2005). An important qualifier therefore is the form and practice of stakeholder participation, not just its existence. Therefore more research is needed to investigate the specific participation practices in the context of collaborative IORs, for example, in order to develop a more thorough understanding of participation and organizational communication.

Thus far most stakeholder research has focused overwhelmingly on business ethics, fiduciary responsibilities, and management strategy. This is not to say that communication has been excluded completely. Many scholars do in fact discuss communication, but usually only as a general recommendation (e.g., Ulmer, 2001) or generic outcome variable (e.g., Strong, Ringer, & Taylor, 2001). Communication is treated mainly as a black box, a vague package whose specific contents are unclear.

Much of the stakeholder literature talks about how organizations manage or govern stakeholders, yet minimal work has been done to explain or investigate explicit communication attributes and processes. Even though communication would seem to be such a vital part of stakeholder relationships, the fact remains that very little is known about "how to integrate communications with the strategy development and implementation work" of strategic management with various stakeholders" (Bronn & Bronn, 2003, p. 302). One important exception is the work of Deetz (1992, 1995) and his stakeholder model of participation and organizations. At a more conceptual level, Deetz (1992) sees stakeholder participation as dealing with who has a right to contribute meaning to a group or organization. "Which individuals have access to the various systems and structures of communication, and can they articulate their own needs and desires within them?" he asks (p. 94). Stakeholder communication involves all relevant stakeholders making substantive contributions to the decision-making process and being included in the interactions that create organizational meanings. Despite this important perspective, communication is a largely unexplored phenomenon in stakeholder research, yet critical to any stakeholder relationship.

This is especially true regarding stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs, making this an important area to make a substantial contribution to the organizational communication literature. Organizational communication scholarship has much to gain by exploring issues of how and whose interests are represented at the table and how stakeholders participate in the negotiation of these interests. For example, Putnam and Poole (1987) call for more research on the "interactions that bridge organizations

and…processes that compose institutions" (p. 583). Stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs is one such area where social interaction spans the boundaries of individual organizations and functions to create an institution. Additionally, studying stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs responds to McPhee and Poole's (2001) call to "flesh out, evaluate, and revise our understanding of how communication constitutes, enacts, or enforces structure and of structure's discursive nature" (p. 538). Collaborative IORs are a dynamic organizational structure and we need to know more about how communication practices, such as stakeholder participation, help create and sustain these structures. If, as Putnam (1989) and Mumby (1988) claim, organizations are essentially the product of various stakeholder relationships and negotiations, then examination of stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs should yield valuable insights into these areas. This also represents an important step in the development of organizational communication theory, especially by helping to navigate the micro-macro-meso territory that leads to problems of conceptualization and explanation (McPhee & Poole, 2001) in organizational communication scholarship. Stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs consists of various micro communication practices that play out in group-level situations and have broader macro-level implications for the multiple organizations represented. A focused investigation in to the communication practices of stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs is needed to clarify these distinctions.

At this point I have explained the significance of interorganizational relationships, highlighted collaborative IORs as an important interorganizational subcategory, discussed the lack of communication scholarship in the IOR literature, and identified

leadership and stakeholder participation as key communication processes that are relevant to collaborative IORs and warrant further research. The final part of my initial argument in this chapter is to locate this study of leadership and stakeholder participation within a specific collaborative IOR environment, and the nonprofit sector provides such a context.

Collaborative IORs in the Nonprofit Sector

One area where collaborative IORs are especially significant is the nonprofit sector[1]. Consider the prevalence of nonprofit interorganizational collaboration surrounding Hurricane Katrina. Much of the relief effort was facilitated by the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. Not only did these organizations coordinate with government agencies and private corporations, but they also worked with local nonprofits in a vast effort to serve the critical needs of the victims. Although this was an isolated incident, full recovery will still take several years of coordination to complete. Scholars, business professionals, and politicians are now exploring these types of IORs as permanent vehicles for disaster relief (Thomas & Fritz, 2006). Interorganizational coordination in the nonprofit sector is essential in order to avoid service duplication and delivery gaps (Gillespie, 1991), and not just for disaster relief. Interorganizational collaboration is thus one of the key factors to the success of service delivery in the nonprofit sector.

The nonprofit sector is one of the most important organizational structures in our society. In the U.S. alone there are 1.8 million registered nonprofit organizations (NPOs) (O'Neill, 2002), representing $2 trillion in assets and $700 million in revenues (Bradley,

[1] Nonprofits are organizations that exist to provide public and/or private goods without commercial or monetary profit that is distributed to owners. They are legally established through section 501© of the United States Internal Revenue Code.

Jansen & Silverman, 2003). Heimovics, Herman, and Jurkeiwicz (1993) claim that it is virtually impossible to comprehend public policy in America without a clear understanding of the nonprofit sector. Outside the U.S. NPOs play a vital role in providing support to developing nations, supplying emergency relief, and influencing government programs. Although the diversity of organizations and interests makes it incredibly difficult to define the nonprofit sector, Frumkin (2002) identifies three features that are common to all NPOs: (1) they do not coerce participation, (2) they operate without distributing profits to stakeholders, and (3) they exist without simple and clear lines of ownership and accountability (p. 3). He goes on to indicate four underlying aspects that further define the sector: (1) service delivery, (2) social entrepreneurship, (3) civic and political engagement, and (4) values and faith (Frumpkin, 2002, p. 25). From this foundation NPOs operate as "mediating structures" (Berger & Neuhaus, 1977, p. 148) between the individual lives of citizens and the larger institutions of governments and corporations.

Despite recent tendencies towards competition and entrepreneurship (Frumkin, 2002), a prominent characteristic of the nonprofit sector is that more and more work is being accomplished through collaborative partnerships. Several reasons are behind this trend, such as resource and service gaps (Wolch, 1996), increased demand for social services (Keyes, Schwartz, & Vidal, 1996), the requirements of foundation grants (Talkakashi & Smutny, 2001), and legal mandates from government funders (Guo & Acar, 2005). These partnerships or coalitions may be short-lived or ongoing, but they all require a high level of cooperation among organizational members. Many NPOs do not

have the tangible resources or expertise to address all the issues relevant to their mission, so they seek out partnerships with other NPOs in order to provide a more comprehensive response to the issues. Other issues, such as natural disasters, are unexpected and require solutions from multiple NPOs. In addition, "government agencies and private foundations that provide funding increasingly require some form of collaboration in the implementation of social services" (Einbinder, 2000, p. 120). Overall, many factors are converging to make collaboration a dominant feature of the nonprofit sector.

Vangen and Huxham (2003) point out that although there is substantial rhetoric about the benefits of nonprofit collaboration, many difficulties arise when NPOs partner together in collaborative IORs. These include differing norms and procedures across organizations, turf and territorial issues, organizational autonomy, community representation, funder accountability (Takahashi & Smutny, 2002), and uncertainty about the long-term impacts of NPO collaboration (Backman & Smith, 2000). Despite the admirable goals of community improvement and cooperative relationships, nonprofit collaborative IORs are complicated partnerships that require complex decision-making and strategic thinking.

The organizational structure of a nonprofit collaboration immediately calls attention to how communication functions within these interorganizational associations. Whether this process of communication runs vertically within the organization or laterally across organizations at every hierarchical level, it directly influences the organization's productivity and ability to achieve its goals (Spillan, Mino, & Rowles, 2002). In particular, this study focuses on the issues of leadership and stakeholder

participation. These are identified as two key aspects of organizational communication that are highlighted in nonprofit collaboration because of the way authority and influence function in nonprofit collaborations and the diversity of interests represented in these collaborative IORs.

Rationale

I argue that the proposed study is justified for four major reasons. First, the topic of leadership is extremely prevalent in society. There is a never-ending stream of popular-press leadership books published each year that romanticize the concept (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985) and promise to deliver "effectiveness," the holy grail of leadership. In politics, education, business, and virtually every other area of society we hear about the importance of leadership or the negative ramifications of poor leadership. Yet much of the time little is done to explain what is meant by leadership and how it actually relates to other social processes. In fact, there is a sizable discrepancy between how leadership is discussed in the popular press and academic literatures (Chen & Meindl, 1991). This had led some scholars to view leadership as one of the most "fragmented and disappointing bodies of research" in organizations (Phills, 2004, p. 47). One value of the proposed study is that it will add to the empirical understanding of leadership in organizations and continues to bridge the gap between the anecdotal evidence of much the popular press literature and the academic perspectives of organizational scholarship. In particular, this study helps move the literature towards more of a field approach that investigates leadership and participation as they naturally occur in collaborative IORs, as well as advocating a more integrative approach of

analysis that is grounded in a cross-disciplinary understanding of these topics. The benefit of this field data will be its availability to others as a useful heuristic and the ability to leverage conceptual and pre-theoretical models from case analysis that are part of my long-term research agenda.

Second, the present study is justified based on the limitations in previous research. Research in the areas of leadership and stakeholder participation has reached a stalemate, to some extent, and could benefit from research contexts that represent modern forms of organizing that have not been well considered in previous work. These include settings that are less hierarchical, more informal, and have more diverse participants than the traditional bureaucratic settings that ground much of the organizational literature. Instead, "network organizations" (see van Alstyne, 1997) such as collaborative IORs are more focused on the patterns of relations within and among organizations and raise important questions about authority, influence, and the involvement of diverse stakeholders. Previous research lacks an understanding of the communication practices and processes that function in IORs and facilitate successful relationships between organizations. Most of the conventional leadership theories were developed in the context of hierarchical organizations and traditional superior-subordinate relationships. Yet the flattening of bureaucracies and the emergence of network organizations calls for leadership research that is specific to these contexts. Collaborative IORs are one such context that could breathe new life into leadership research. Additionally, stakeholder theory would benefit from research that investigates stakeholder relationships beyond the context of shareholder rights and fiduciary responsibilities. Collaborative IORs sidestep

many of the corporate issues that have stalled stakeholder research and instead highlight stakeholder relationships in ways that would be constructive for future theory development, such as self-organization and disconnection (Santoro, Borges, & Rezende, 2006), network formation (Bovasso, 1992), and reciprocal influence (Tichy & Fombrun, 1979). Overall, the pos-bureaucratic or network organizations of collaborative IORs can help re-orient our thinking about the traditional organizational topics of leadership and stakeholder thinking and thus deserves scholarly attention.

Furthermore, the participation literature continues to demonstrate the limited impact participation has on satisfaction and productivity, despite intuitions that suggest otherwise (Deetz, 2005). The general consensus of the participation literature (see Locke & Schwieger, 1979; Miller & Monge, 1986; Marshall & Stohl, 1993; & Wagner, 1994 for reviews) is that participation has a little, if any affect on productivity and positive, but marginal affect on satisfaction. Yet most of this research developed in hierarchical and bureaucratic organizational structures, which may restrict the importance of participation. Participation research needs more development in non-hierarchical and post-bureaucratic organizations that are inherently participative in order to fully understand the value of participation within organizational structures. Collaborative IORs provide an opportunity to explore the specific communication processes associated with participation, especially in the context of leadership communication and stakeholder relationships that will result in an important contribution to the overall participation literature.

Third, this study helps us understand in greater detail how communication processes, specifically leadership and participation, work in IORs. The results of this study will provide a conceptual foundation that can ground future empirical work, especially scale development and theory building. Currently there are not reliable measures of leadership communication and stakeholder participation that are directly relevant to the nonprofit sector, particularly regarding collaborative IORs. Thus it becomes difficult to generalize research findings. Moreover, very few studies have been implemented that explore many of the alternative leadership theories most relevant to collaborative IORs, such as shared leadership (Conger & Pearce, 2003). However, the present study will help develop grounded theory that will assist future research in the nonprofit sector.

Finally, this study provides an opportunity to understand a non-business model of organizational leadership and stakeholder participation. Most of the literature on leadership and stakeholder participation comes from corporate environments that operate under market conditions and involve financial incentives tied to traditional business models. However, there are many non-market and non-business organizational structures that shape our society, such as collaborative IORs in the nonprofit sector. For example, Lewis (2005) indicates several characteristics that are unique (or more prominent) in the civil society sector, such as social capital, mission fulfillment, and volunteer relationships. The present study can help us understand how these characteristics (and more) may affect or be affected by leadership and stakeholder participation.

Significance of the Study

Over the last quarter century, major changes in the nonprofit sector have shaped the way nonprofit organizations (NPOs) and government agencies provide social services to local communities. In contrast to the New Deal and Great Society policies that shaped the 20th century, recent political developments emphasize a decentralization of government functions (Formicola, Segers, & Weber, 2003; Wolpert, 1993). Consequently, the welfare reforms of the Clinton administration and the faith-based initiative of the Bush administration have elevated the role of NPOs that provide health and human services to their communities (Black, Koopman, & Ryden, 2004). This creates high expectations for NPOs to provide critical resources and services to their communities. One result of these developments has been increased pressure from private and public funders for NPOs to work together and develop collaborative solutions to society's problems (Einbinder, 2000; Foster-Fishman, Salem, Allen, & Fahrbach, 2001; Mizrahi & Rosenthal, 2001). Therefore it is critical for our society to have a thorough understanding of collaborative IORs in the nonprofit sector.

In addition to these developments in the nonprofit sector, the inherent connections between leadership, participation, stakeholder relationships, and organizational communication make this study a significant piece of scholarly investigation. Additionally, the context of nonprofit collaboration is an excellent environment to explore these topics because of the emphasis on social interaction and organizational relationships. Many aspects of this research represent uncharted territory and therefore will be a valuable addition to the knowledge base of organizational communication

scholarship. More specifically, this research can be an important step in the much-needed development of macro organizational communication theory (Jones, Watson, Gardner, & Gallois, 2004). Communication scholars also lament the lack of theory that is unique to organizational communication (Taylor, Flanigan, Cheney, & Seibold, 2001; Tompkins & Wanca-Thibault, 2001). As Lewis (in press) explains, organizational communication scholars tend to rely on other disciplines to provide the theoretical and conceptual foundations for the field. Exploring the practices of leadership communication and stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs will yield valuable insights about IORs that can assist the theoretical development of organizational communication.

The present study is also significant because of its many practical applications. As previously mentioned, collaborative IORs are becoming a hallmark of the nonprofit sector. In addition to its theoretical and conceptual contributions, this research has much to say about how nonprofit collaborations function and the communication practices that make them more constructive. It is very important for nonprofit practitioners to understand how organizational communication, specifically leadership and stakeholder participation, can make collaborations operate more successfully. Practitioners outside the nonprofit sector can also benefit from this research. Some of the work in the private and governmental sectors can resemble nonprofit collaboration, such as separate departments within an organization working together towards goal achievement. Although different than nonprofit collaboration, these contexts still represent situations where leadership may be shared or dispersed across a group and involve conditions

where multiple stakeholders need to participate in the various processes. Consequently the knowledge developed from this research can benefit practitioners in many sectors of organizational activity.

Summary

To summarize, the vast amount of IOR literature demonstrates the prevalence and importance of IORs throughout every sector of society. Previous IOR research has established a thorough understanding of the antecedent conditions surrounding IORs, ways to define and classify IORs, the structural arrangements of various IORs, and theoretical perspectives to frame IOR activity. Yet limited research has investigated specific practices of organizational communication, despite their importance to IOR outcomes and processes. In particular, leadership and stakeholder participation are identified as specific organizational communication practices that warrant further investigation and scholarly development.

Collaborations are recognized as a specific subcategory of IORs that focus on coordination, cooperation and joint goal accomplishment. Furthermore, the nonprofit sector represents an area of significant collaborative IOR activity and an excellent context to advance our understanding of organizational communication processes in IORs. This will yield important insights for both organizational practitioners and theorists, especially regarding how organizational communication functions in collaborative IORs and how communication practices can facilitate the success (or failure) of these important organizational relationships. More specifically, we can learn more about the locus of leadership in collaborative IORs and the communication practices associated with

leadership enactment and recognition. We can also learn how participation facilitates the development of stakeholder identities in collaborative IORs and how various "stakes" are communicated. Collaborative IORs represent flatter, less hierarchical organizational structures where authority and influence are distributed and participation is inherent. This makes for an excellent context to advance our knowledge of leadership and stakeholder participation as key topics of organizational communication scholarship.

The following study detainls an investigation into the communication processes of leadership and stakeholder participation within the interorganizational context of nonprofit collaboration. Despite the importance of IORs in our society, and particularly the nonprofit sector, research continues to show that the majority of IORs fail (Barringer & Harrison, 2000). Therefore a better understanding of the procedures and processes that facilitate successful IORs is needed, both for theory and practice. This study represents an important contribution to this effort and to the development of organizational communication scholarship.

Chapter 1 summarized the topics of leadership and stakeholder participation in the context of nonprofit collaborative IORs, specifically establishing their connection to organizational communication and providing a rationale for the present study. Chapter 2 takes this introduction further by providing a thorough literature review of leadership and stakeholder participation research and identifying specific research questions that guide the study. Chapter 3 explains the methodology used to collect and analyze data. Chapter 4 reports the results of the study and answers the research questions. Chapter 5 discusses

the conclusions and implications of this research, while also offering directions for future scholarship.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to review several bodies of literature that provide the research background for the present study. In particular, the topics of leadership communication and stakeholder participation are explored within the context of collaborative IORs in order to understand previous theoretical and empirical work, as well as to surface questions to guide future research. Given the rationale developed in chapter one, leadership and stakeholder participation are identified as two important communicative aspects of collaborative IORs that need further investigation in order to advance our thinking about these distinctive organizational structures in the nonprofit sector. I begin with an overview of the IOR literature, focusing mainly on the definitions and theoretical perspectives that frame IOR research. Next I review leadership research, especially the development of non-traditional or alternative leadership theories and leadership communication. Then I turn my attention to the stakeholder perspective in organizational studies and its relevance to collaborative IORs in the nonprofit sector. This leads to an examination of the participation literature, which connects to the stakeholder perspective for a thorough understanding of stakeholder participation and organizational communication. Finally, I identify several research questions that emerge from the previous research that serve as the basis of my empirical investigation.

Interorganizational Relationships

This section looks at interorganizational relationships, with a specific focus on collaboration between organizations and communication within these collaborative IORs.

Definitions and Theoretical Perspectives

Definitions of IORs focus on the "enduring linkages" (Miller, et al., 1995) and common sets of expectations (Schopler, 1987) that develop between multiple organizations. For example, Oliver (1990) defines IORs as the "relatively enduring transactions, flows, and linkages that occur among or between an organization and one or more organizations in its environment" (p. 241), though some IORs may come together quickly and are relatively short-lived. They allow members to develop both strong and weak ties (Granovetter, 1973, 1983) in order to expand their network of organizational connections.

IORs are further classified based on origin (voluntary vs. mandated), task structure (high vs. low) (Schopler, 1987), inclusivity and intensity (Whetten, 1981; Aldrich & Whetten, 1981), formality (Smith, et al., 1995), level of competition (Monge, et al., 1998), and coupling (loose vs. tight) (Weick, 1976). Scholars also identify several motivators or determinants that help define IORs. For example, Oliver (1990) lists necessity, asymmetry, efficiency, reciprocity, stability, and legitimacy as defining IOR characteristics based on the reasons why organizations form relationships. Miller, et al. (1995) add to this by including resource management, autonomy, and coordination as additional IOR motivations. Although IOR configurations are broad and complex, these definitional characteristics help frame the various associations that exist between organizations and guide scholars as they develop this literature.

In addition to these defining characteristics, Barringer and Harrison (2000) identify several theoretical perspectives that shape IOR scholarship. Transaction cost

economics (Williamson, 1975, 1991, 1998) is a broad theoretical view that suggests the costs associated with organizational activity lead to certain organizational configurations, such as hierarchies or collaborations. Resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) explains that organizations form relationships in order to secure necessary resources. Strategic choice theory (Jarillo, 1986; Kogut, 1988; Shan, 1990) shows how changing external environments influence organizations to form relationships in order to achieve their strategies. Stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1994) sees organizations as complex networks of relationships among people who have stakes in organizational outcomes. Learning theory (Hamel, 1991; Mowery, Oxley, & Silverman, 1996) demonstrates how various interorganizational connections help organizations learn to function more effectively in their environments. Finally, institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) considers the social processes that establish and sustain organizational structures. Though none of these theories explain IORs completely, they do offer several complimentary perspectives to help understand various IOR phenomena.

Collaborative IORs

One type of IORs that organizations form in order to leverage resources and solve problems is a collaboration. Collaborative IORs are understood as "a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible" (Gray, 1989, p. 5). At the most basic level, collaboration between organizations involves (1) cooperation, coordination, and exchange of resources (e.g.,

people, funding, information, ideas), and (2) mutual respect for individual goals and/or joint goals (Lewis, 2006).

Although not a substantial body of research, collaborative IORs have received some attention from communication scholars. Lewis' (2006) extensive review of the collaboration literature identifies three important themes of collaborative communication: identity construction, mutual exchange, and interpersonal skills. Identity construction entails the development of collaborative partners' understandings of themselves and each other through interaction. This may involve how communication constructs notions of relative power and equality (Akhavian et al., 1999) or how collaborative partners deal with issues of self-exposition through conflict (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). Collaborative communication as mutual exchange acknowledges the value of information sharing among collaborative partners. For example, Browning et al.'s (1995) study of SEMATECH (a semiconductor partnership) demonstrates the significance of proprietary information as it relates to collaborative motivations, and Iverson & McPhee (2002) show how information exchange helps facilitate the informal knowledge management structures of Communities of Practice. Finally, communication is recognized as an important interpersonal skill for successful collaboration. Communication skills such as conflict resolution (Kuhn & Poole, 2000), assertiveness (Street & Millay, 2001), face support (Jameson, 2004), reasoning, and trust building (Lakey & Canary, 2002) all play a vital role in the development and maintenance of productive collaborative partnerships.

Keyton, Ford, and Smith (2006) see collaboration communication best conceptualized as a multi-level phenomena that occurs between individuals working in

groups as representatives of organizations. Their meso-level communicative model of collaboration thus elevates communication to the essence of collaboration, not just a tool of message exchange within a pre-existing organizational structure. Keyton and Stallworth (2003) also studied collaborative IORs from a bona fide groups perspective, which highlighted the permeable, yet stable boundaries of collaborative groups and the interdependence with their environment. From this they claim that a robust communication network is the crucial component for the success of a collaborative IOR.

Hardy, Lawrence, and Phillips (1998) bring a discursive approach to the study or IOR collaboration. They use narrative theory to focus on the micro-dynamics of conversational activity and the stories produced by these interactions. Their goal is to establish a discursive link between talk and action in collaborative IORs. In a subsequent piece (Lawrence, Phillips, & Hardy, 1999), they claim:

> A framework based on a discursive understanding of collaboration can provide a coherent basis for understanding the dynamics of collaboration, the relation of collaboration to its broader institutional context, and the management and facilitation of collaborative activity as a communicative process. (p. 479)

Their work helps establish a conceptual framework for understanding IOR collaboration as a communicative process.

A final line of research regarding IOR collaboration and communication comes from the work of Heath (2007; & Frey, 2004, & Sias, 1999). She describes the importance of "collaborative spirit" between organizations in collaborative IORs, which is developed through communication about shared mission and shared power.

Communication practices related to shared mission include "discussion of the mission, reaffirmation, testimony, and pride statements;" communication about shared power involved "use of a consent process, barter and negotiating behavior, provision of equal opportunity, soliciting others' input, and the rotating chairperson" (Heath, 1999, p. 356). Heath (2007) also emphasizes the role of dialogue in community collaboration and uses dialogic theory to explore how stakeholders in collaborative IORs negotiate democratic outcomes. Her findings show how "a dialogic moment, although embedded in a homogenous partnership that facilitated discursive closure, constituted meaningful organizational change" (Heath, 2007, p. 145).

This research provides an important starting point for understanding the role of communication and human interaction in collaborative IORs. The next step is to identify specific communication practices and how they function in collaborative partnerships between multiple organizations. I focus on leadership and stakeholder participation as two aspects of communication that play a significant role in the development and maintenance of collaborative IORs.

Leadership and Organizational Communication

Leadership is generally understood as a process of influencing followers towards a particular goal or direction[2]. The study of leadership is significant to organizational communication for several reasons. First, there is an inherent connection between leadership and organizations because leadership is primarily exercised within organizations (Cyert, 1990). The concept of leadership requires a form of social system

[2] This definition emerges from numerous perspectives on leadership found in the literature. For relevant summaries, see Hackman and Johnson (2004), Bass & Stodgill (1990), and Yukl (2005).

and implies movement towards some type of goal achievement. The basic function of leadership is to organize the activities of the social system and overcome obstacles to accomplishing goals (Weick, 1978; Shaw, 1971). Leadership facilitates the production of an organizational structure, which enables leaders and followers to "understand the information inputs supplied by the organizational environment and perform actions based on those interpretations that allow them to accomplish their tasks" (Barge & Schlueter, 1991, p. 543). This symbiotic relationship makes leadership an important topic for any area of organizational scholarship.

In addition, there is a fundamental link between leadership and communication. Leadership is inseparable from specific communication situations, making communication the very life of leadership (Thayer, 1988). As Drecksel (1991) explains, leadership is a process of influences towards achieving goals, and the process of influence occurs through communication. Sypher (1991) reminds us that of all organizational activities, leadership is primarily about communication. This is because leadership is "enacted through communication" (Barge, 1994, p. 21) as leaders mediate between group actions, performance outcomes, and the organization's information environment (Weick, 1978). Leaders are "managers of meaning" (Bryman, 1999, p. 26), which involves symbolic action, sense-making, and developing social consensus through communication. Since leadership is not necessarily located in an individual, scholars who study leadership must focus on the "pattered, sequential behavior of leaders and constituents who form an interactional system" (Drecksel, 1991, p. 383). This highlights communication and social interaction as essential elements of leadership. Combined with

leadership's connection to organizations, leadership is clearly a significant area of study for organizational communication research. Given this importance, I now review the primary research relevant to leadership and organizational communication.

Theories, Models, and Research Findings

We can understand the vast amount of leadership research relevant to organizational communication in terms of various theories and models that guide leadership thinking and have emerged to make sense of leadership processes, as wells as empirical studies that explore specific outcomes related to leadership practice. These encompass both "traditional" or "classic" views of leadership and "non-traditional" or "alternative" views that challenge us to think about leadership in new ways. There are also several studies and perspectives that focus specifically on leadership communication and leadership in nonprofit collaborations. All together they provide a thorough understanding of leadership communication in organizations.

Traditional and Classic Leadership Theories

Discussions of leadership in any field begin with classic theories that developed over the past 50-60 years. These include research on leadership traits, situations, and styles. These are not directly communication theories (although communication plays an implicit role in all of them), but most work on leadership in organizations is related to this early research. Extensive summaries are provided elsewhere (Bass & Stodgill, 1990; Yukl, 2005; Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Northouse 2007), but a brief overview is justified to contextualize this specific literature review.

Early work on leadership focused on the physical and psychological characteristics of leaders. This traits approach, pioneered by Stogdill (1948, 1974) has been criticized for being too inconsistent and lacking strong predictive ability. Although it is recognized that certain personality characteristics tend to relate to leadership, the traits approach gave way to a situational approach to leadership that saw leadership contingent upon various situational variables. Four dominant theories emerged from this thinking: Contingency Theory, Path-Goal Theory, Situational Leadership Theory, and Leader-Member Exchange Theory.

Fiedler's (1967, 1978) Contingency Theory of leadership is based on ratings of least-preferred coworkers (LPC), which distinguishes leaders based on concerns for tasks or relationships. Three main factors influence a leader's effectiveness in a given situation: position power, task structure, and leader-member relations. This theory has intuitive power, but its utility has been questioned because it requires situations to be adapted to leaders instead of leaders adapting to situations since LPC score are relatively stable measures of personality (Hackman & Johnson, 2004).

Path-Goal Theory was developed by House and Mitchell (1974) as an extension of Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) to leadership research. It is concerned with leaders' abilities to motivate followers towards a particular goal based on communication and situational factors. Directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership styles are matched with two situation variables: nature of followers and nature of task. Other situation variables are ignored or simplified, but Path-Goal Theory does

provide a reasonable understanding of leader-follower motivations towards goal achievement.

Hersey and Blanchard (1972) identify follower readiness as an important factor for leadership effectiveness. Their Situational Leadership Theory charts levels of follower readiness based on ability, willingness, and confidence. These readiness levels are matched with varying degrees of task and relationship orientations, resulting in four leadership behaviors: delegating, participating, selling, or telling. Therefore leadership effectiveness is a function of follower readiness and task/relationship orientation.

A final situational theory, Leader-Member Exchange (Graen & Scandura, 1987), looks at the specific relationships between leaders and followers. The main focus of this theory is on two different groups of people that leaders relate with: in-groups and out-groups. Leader-member relationships for the in-group are characterized by high levels of trust, mutual influence, and support. This leads to more autonomy in task development and more responsibility/influence in decision making (Hackman & Johnson, 2004). Out-group exchanges are just the opposite-less autonomy and responsibility. Situational factors, such as limited time and resources, require leaders to develop in-group and out-group relationships in order to be effective.

Around the same time these contingency theories were developing, a number of other theories emerged that explored various leadership styles. These include the Michigan Leadership Studies (Katz, Maccoby, Gurin, & Floor, 1951), which distinguished between production-oriented and employee-oriented leadership styles, as well as the Ohio State Leadership Studies (Stogdill & Coons, 1957), which differentiated

between leaders who initiated structure and leaders who displayed consideration. Along with Fiedler's Least-Preferred Coworker scale, the Michigan and Ohio State measures are the only leadership studies that have undergone rigorous validity and reliability testing (Barger & Schuleter, 1991).

McGregor (1960) continued this styles approach to leadership with his X and Y theory. He claimed that some people dislike work and will do as little as possible, so leaders need to exercise control, coerce, direct, and threaten (theory X). Other people see work as natural and fulfilling and want to contribute to the organization, so leaders should encourage them based on their individual characteristics and abilities (theory Y). Finally, Blake and Mouton (1964, 1978, 1985) and Blake and McCanse (1991) developed a leadership styles grid based on task orientation and interpersonal orientation. Their 2 x 2 matrix places leadership styles in one of five locations based on concerns for production and concerns for people.

All these classic theories of leadership styles have been criticized for their simplistic, two-dimensional approach to leadership (Hackman & Johnson, 2004). Additionally, communication is not a central feature to most of these theories (Pavitt, 1999). Yet approaches to leadership based on traits, situations, and styles continue to provide a starting point to understand leadership in organizations; the House's Path-Goal model and Fiedler's Contingency Theory receive the most attention in academic journals, while Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory is most popular in corporate training programs (Zorn, 1991). However, another body of leadership research has been developing along side of (and sometimes in contrast to) the classic leadership theories

that have been the focus of organizational studies for over fifty years. These "alternative" or "non-traditional" leadership theories are in response to the way technology, human resources, and globalization have transformed organizational structures and the way power, authority, and influence function in social systems.

Alternative and Non-Traditional Leadership Theories

In contrast to the traits, situational, and styles approach to leadership that grounded the field, other theories have taken a more holistic and artistic approach to leadership. These include charismatic leadership (Weber, 1947), transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1990), and servant leadership (Graham, 1991, Greenleaf, 1977). These theories focus less on the cause/effect relationship measured by analytic variables and more on the intangible relationships leaders have with followers and the overall *ethos* of the leader. There is also more attention given to persuasion, mutual influence, and socially constructed meaning.

Weber (1947) first identified what he termed "charismatic authority," which was distinct from traditional and rational-legal authority and involved the exemplary actions and character of a heroic leader. This serves as the basis for the development of transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1990), a theory that focuses on the ability of a charismatic leader to transform organizations and people through creating a shared vision and reforming previous assumptions. More specifically, transformational leadership encompasses four components: (1) idealized influence, (2) inspirational motivation, (3) intellectual stimulation, and (4) individual consideration (Beebe & Masterson, 2006). Yammarino & Dubinsky (1994) point out that transformational

leadership is more about a lifestyle and philosophy of leadership than a specific set of behaviors to develop and replicate.

Yet transformational leadership has been criticized for being value-neutral and unable to provide moral safeguards (Graham, 1991). In response, the idea of servant leadership has developed among some scholars and practitioners as a compliment to transformational leadership. Originally developed in the writings of Greenleaf (1977), servant leadership claims that the essence of true leadership is service to others. Spears (2004) synthesizes over twenty years of literature to identify ten central characteristics of servant leadership: (1) listening, (2) empathy, (3) healing, (4) awareness, (5) persuasion, (6) conceptualization, (7) foresight, (8) stewardship, (9) commitment to the growth of people, and (10) building community (Spears, 2004).

Results from subsequent empirical research produced five servant leadership factors – (1) altruistic calling, (2) emotional healing, (3) persuasive mapping, (4) wisdom, and (5) organizational stewardship (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006) – but servant leadership is still criticized among researchers for its limited empirical validation and scholarly development. Feminist scholars have also criticized servant leadership for perpetuating male-centered mythical leadership and patriarchal norms (Eicher-Catt, 2005), while still claiming to offer a genderless approach to leadership. However, servant leadership continues to gain popularity among practitioners for its ethical considerations and holistic perspective towards leadership.

Despite these developments, transformational leadership and servant leadership still resemble classical leadership theories by locating the phenomenon of leadership

within an individual person. In contrast, theories of shared leadership, dispersed leadership, and substitutes for leadership challenge the conventional wisdom of individual leadership. Shared and dispersed leadership theories demonstrate how the locus of leadership can be ambiguous and diffused across multiple people, whereas substitutes for leadership theory suggests alternative variables that can account for decision-making and group performance besides leadership.

Mehra, Smith, Dixon, & Robertson (2006) point out that the idea of leadership distributed across several people (instead of being located in a single person) emerged about fifty years ago in the work of Gibbs (1954) and Bowers and Seashore (1966). The subsequent literature reveals three distinctive aspects of distributed leadership: (1) leadership as an emergent property, (2) openness of boundaries, and (3) leadership according to expertise (Woods, Bennett, Harvey, & Wise, 2004). These elements point to an agency/structure distinction in the leadership process and demonstrate how the influence in social systems can shift or be allocated.

Related to this is the concept of shared leadership, which essentially means that leadership is practiced by the aggregate of team/group members (Pearce, 1999). This idea has received extensive investigation by Pearce and his colleagues (Pearce & Sims, 2000, 2002; Pearce, Perry, & Sims, 2001; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Pearce, Yoo, & Alavi, 2004). Their work challenges the traditional leadership models of downward influence through a single leader in a supervisory role. Instead, they explore how leadership can be decentralized throughout a group. This involves more of a relational process that

depends on social interactions across different levels of an organization (Fletcher & Käufer, 2003).

These ideas of shared and dispersed leadership are gaining popularity among scholars who recognize the changing nature of temporary organizations, though few empirical studies of shared or dispersed leadership have been implemented (Conger & Pearce, 2003). In fact, there is research that suggests group participants do not favor shared leadership. Berkowitz (1953) found that group cohesiveness, productivity, and satisfaction increase when stronger leader roles were distinguished from participant member roles. Furthermore, Ludwig (2002) argues that humans normally compete to develop a status hierarchy; that is the nature of leadership. However, the early conceptual work involving dispersed and shared leadership suggests a level of face validity and practicality that should result in substantive research findings.

In addition to theories of dispersed and shared leadership, some scholars are developing alternative leadership theory that replace the idea of leadership altogether. Kerr and Jermier (1978) originally proposed fourteen characteristics of subordinates, tasks, and organizations[3] that could neutralize or substitute for the influence of a leader. The idea of substitutes for leadership has gained traction because the moderating effects of these substitutes seem to explain why some leadership practices are effective in some situations, yet are ineffective or even problematic in other situations (Podsakoff &

[3] *Subordinates*: ability/experience/knowledge, need for independence, professional orientation, and indifference to organizational rewards. *Tasks*: unambiguous/routine, methodologically invariant provides its own feedback, and intrinsically satisfying. *Organizations*: formalizations, inflexibility, highly specialized functions, cohesive work group, organizational rewards not within leader control, and spatial distance between leader and subordinate.

MacKenzie, 1997). In addition to the original substitutes identified by Kerr and Jermier (1978), subsequent research shows that professional standards in an organization account for more unique variance than individual leadership behavior (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996). Also, Yukl's (1994) Multiple Linkage Model incorporates leadership substitutes and neutralizers as significant explanatory variables.

However, substitutes for leadership theory has been criticized for many reasons. First, most of the early empirical tests of the substitute model were not supportive (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997). Dionne, Yammarino, Howell, and Villa (2005) have criticized the substitutes for leadership literature for claiming to account for more outcome variance than empirical studies would suggest. They are mindful to reject the argument that "if it isn't leadership, it must be substitutes" (p. 173). Second, some scholars claim that substitutes for leadership theory is not saying anything new. As Schriesheim (1997) points out, the basic tenants of the theory closely resemble House's (1971) Path-Goal Theory and Hunt's (1975) concept of nonleader sources of clarity. Despite these criticisms, the substitutes for leadership literature suggests an alternative to traditional models of leadership that focus on the influence of an individual leader in the position of authority. The alternative theories of substitutes for leadership and dispersed/shared leadership provide the foundation for much of the contemporary leadership scholarship, though traditional and classic theories still offer a useful vocabulary and starting point for research.

A final alternative to traditional leadership theories involves Barker's (1993) concept of concertive control. In contrast to hierarchical forms of control that are

imposed from above, concertive control involves the pressure to conform to shared values and norms within a self-managed team apart from bureaucratic authority. Barker's (1993) research shows that self-managed teams can actually create informal control systems that are even more restrictive than and constraining than hierarchical control. This important finding runs counter to popular intuitions (Peters, 1988; Drucker, 1988) that removal of hierarchical bureaucracies will free employees from the "iron cage" (Weber, 1947) of control. This demonstrates that the authority and control normally associated with traditional notions of leadership are still prevalent in post-bureaucratic, non-hierarchical organizational structures.

Additional Leadership Frameworks and Models

In addition to the traditional and alternative leadership theories discussed above, the vast literature on leadership contains a variety of conceptual frameworks and model that shape the way scholars think about leadership in organizations. These include exploring leadership as dualisms, metaphors, and distanced. I also review models of group leadership, superior/ subordinate relationships, message-centered cognition, and competing values.

Fairhurst (2001) argues that a good way to think about leadership is based on a model of dualisms that function in most organizational systems. These include:

- Leadership/management
- Transformational/transactional
- Self-management/external or super-leadership
- Organic/mechanistic
- Consideration/initiating structure
- Individual/collective
- Formal/informal
- Participative/autocratic

Instead of trying to solve these tensions with any one particular approach to leadership communication, it is better to understand that many of them are at play to certain degrees in any organizational environment. Different sides of a given dualism are needed in different organizations and for different people. This brings a level of complexity to the study and application of research that should improve our understanding of communication between leaders and followers in organizations (Fairhurst, 2001).

Another way scholars think about leadership in organizations involves the use of metaphors. Two primary metaphors are used to understand leadership communication: the physics metaphor and the leader-as-medium metaphor. Drecksel (1991) explains that the physics metaphor characterizes the leader-follower relationship as act-react. This cause/effect perspective sees leadership as a singular phenomenon; and individual property of a person in a position of authority. The focus is on controlling follower behavior through various behavioral inputs that should yield specific outputs. In contrast, the leader-as-medium metaphor (Weick, 1978) places leadership within the organizational communication system existing between leaders and followers. Leadership becomes a process that develops among people through communication; leadership is a property of the system, not a person occupying a position. Leaders mediate between organizational members and organizational resources (i.e. information) and facilitate the process towards goal achievement. The leader-as-medium metaphor magnifies the role of communication and the meaning that is developed and exchanged throughout the organization.

With the development of globalization and multi-national organizations, another important area of leadership thinking involves distance and proximity. Although a specific model of distanced leadership communication has yet to emerge, Connaughton and Daly (2004, 2005) have started to lay the foundation by identifying many of the key factors involved in leadership communication between organizational members who are geographically separated. Their research demonstrates many challenges to leading from a distance: building trust, inspiring, managing conflict, preventing feelings of disconnectedness, monitoring and evaluating performance, communicating vision, establishing loyalty to the org, and maintaining teamwork (Connaughton & Daly, 2005). They also examined the relationship between members' identification with their team leader and four other relevant variables: trust, isolation, accessibility, and information equity and found that,

Identification and trust are closely related constructs in both distanced and proximate settings; that perceived isolation is inversely related with leader identification in proximate settings, but not in distances ones; that accessibility is positively related to identification with leader in both distanced and proximate settings; and that perceived information equity is positively related with leader identification in distanced and proximate settings (Connaughton & Daly, 2004, p. 89). These findings are important because they are from the perspective of team members, not just leaders, as in most previous distanced leadership research. As technology and global economies continue to change organizational structures, it will be important to understand how leaders can

communicate effectively with followers who may be dispersed throughout a variety of geographic locations.

Another context for leadership communication model development comes from group/team dynamics that function in organizations. Barge (1989) compares two perspectives of group/team leadership: the Group Leader Influence model (GLI) and the Leaderless Group Discussion model (LGD). The GLI model assumes: "(1) leadership is a property of an individual within the group, (2) leadership emergence and maintenance are enhanced as the leader's activity level increases, and (3) individual leadership activity is the best predictor of group outcomes" (p. 238). In this model communication is used to dominate the group's activity by gaining the compliance of group members (Drecksel, 1991).

In contrast, the LGD, based on Fisher's (1980) leaderless group research, assumes: "(1) the group possesses the capacity for self-determination, (2) pressures from external authority structures are minimized, and (3) groups create collective structures which facilitate goal achievement" (Barge, 1989, p. 239). This model recognizes that leadership is a function of group dynamics, not located in an individual. Structural components of the organizing system and the relationships among group members help us understand group productivity more than the behaviors of any one person. Barge's (1989) research on the LGD model confirms these basic assumptions. He demonstrated that "no individual leadership behaviors emerged as statistically significant discriminators for group productivity" (p. 244). Instead, two group leadership behavioral factors emerged as significant variables: task orientation and dynamism. This research

challenges many of the traditional views that see group leadership as the function of an individual. It also places more emphasis on organizational communication because the organizing structure and interactions among group members become the foundation of group leadership.

Against the background of leadership communication in organizations, it is also important to understand superior-subordinate relationships that operate within organizing systems. Conrad and Haynes (2001) note that this has been a major focus of organizational communication scholarship since Jablin's (1979) initial work on superior-subordinate communication. Redding's (1972) early review of superior-subordinate research listed four conclusions that guided future superior-subordinate research: (1) effective supervisors were more communication-focused than ineffective leaders and enjoyed communicating, (2) effective supervisors were more receptive and responsive to inquired from subordinates, (3) effective supervisors used persuasion more than commanding/demanding, and (4) effective supervisors were more open about organizations changes and the reasons for those changes. This research laid a strong foundation for understanding the communication aspects of superior-subordinate relationships.

Conrad and Haynes (2001) present a four-part model of superior-subordinate research that highlights supervisory communication, motivation, performance, and situation. This helps simplify the vast amount of superior-subordinate research, too extensive for a full summary here. Notable extensions of this model include Fairhurst, Green, and Snavely (1984), who expand the unit of analysis of superior-subordinate

relationships to entire chains of control episodes, not just single events; Kay and Christophel (1995), who establish a relationship between openness and nonverbal immediacy in connection with subordinate motivation; Krone (1991), who demonstrated how subordinate's perceptions of their supervisory relationships influenced their upward influence communication tactics; and Lee (1997), who identified leader-member exchanges between superiors and subordinates as a moderating variable in cooperative communication between group members. All of this research points to the significance of superior-subordinate relationships within the broader scope of leadership communication in organizations.

Another perspective to mention in this section is the model of leadership cognitive processing presented by Peterson and Sorenson (1991). They suggest leaders behave in certain ways because of various contextual demands that influence how they think about leadership. They present thirteen propositions of cognitive leadership that emphasize the strategy and tactics an individual adopts when attempting to enact leadership through communication. These serve as antecedents to leadership behavior. Sypher (1991) critiques this cognitive model, saying it applies more to managers (not leaders) who are more bound by organizational rules. She favors a more message-centered model of organizational leadership that explores how the "interpretations create the social situations by examining the messages produced, the deep structure embedded in them, and the effects they have" (Sypher, 1991, p. 557). From this debate we see the importance of understanding not only how organizational context influences the cognitive

processes of leadership, but also how the messages leaders use function in the organization.

The final leadership perspective reviewed in this section is the competing values framework developed by Yang (1996). This approach integrates competing leadership roles into a single framework and suggests that leaders perform several opposing roles. It is based on the work of Faerman, et al. (1990) and Quinn (1984, 1988) that demonstrates how organizational leaders have to perform competing (and sometimes contradictory) roles in order to fulfill competing expectations. The competing values approach results in four models of organizational leadership and subsequent goals: (1) rational goal – productivity, (2) internal process – stability and control, (3) human relations – concern for participation and people, and (4) open systems – innovation and adaptation (Yang, 1996). Although there is limited empirical validation of this model, it does provide a useful framework for scholars to understand how leadership functions in organizational contexts with competing and contradictory expectations. I conclude this section of the literature review by discussing leadership research that is specific to communication and nonprofit collaboration.

Leadership Communication and Collaboration Leadership

The vast majority of leadership research has not developed in the field of organizational communication, but rather in management and industrial/social/organizational psychology. Additionally, very little empirical research has investigated leadership in the specific context of collaborative IORs. However, there are unique theoretical developments emerging from the discipline of organizational

communication and important research findings related to leadership and communication. Also, there are some empirical studies about leadership in nonprofit collaborations that provide useful starting points for future research.

Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) provide one of the most developed ways of thinking about organizational leadership from an explicitly communicative perspective. Their central claim is that leadership is about managing meaning and language through framing. Framing is "a quality of communication that causes others to accept one meaning over another" (p. xi). Leadership creates meaning by influencing how organizational experiences are perceived and interpreted through symbolic and linguistic tools (Buzzanell, 1996). Leaders provide the vision and direction and control many of the resources needed to achieve organizational goals, but they need followers to see things the same way they do. A framing model of leadership focuses attention on the way leaders use communication to connect with followers and construct similar organizational realities.

Fairhurst (2007) has taken this perspective even further in her theory of discursive leadership. Her argument is that leadership is more inventive than analytic, and she differentiates this perspective from leadership psychology (which grounds the vast majority of past leadership research) that sees leadership and individual and cognitive. Discursive leadership focuses on the talk and text of leadership practices in social systems. This constructionist view implies that leaders must constantly enact and perform relationships with followers through communication and discourse. As Boas (2007) explains,

"Leadership psychology has not focused on the ways in which leaders guide and facilitate the social construction of reality. The discursive approach draws attention to the centrality of communication in leadership processes, an aspect that has been black-boxed by leadership psychology" (p. 200). Thus discursive leadership provides a valuable corrective to previous leadership research by magnifying what has always been implicit: the communication practices of leaders. Furthermore, a growing body of empirical research is developing that explores specific outcomes related to leadership communication. Table 1 presents a summary of these studies and the important implications for leadership communication in organizations.

Finally, a limited number of studies have explored leadership in nonprofit collaborations. Alexander, Comfort, Weiner, and Bogue (2001) see leadership as a critical function for collaborations between nonprofit organizations. They describe a model of collateral leadership where leaders have little formal authority and limited resources. Collateral leadership accounts for key distinctives of nonprofit collaboration, including the complexity of the task, the diversity of the interests, and the time constraints on voluntary activities. As Alexander et al., (2001) explain, "The voluntary nature of a [collaboration], its diverse membership, and the complex and sometimes ambiguous nature of [collaboration] goals create particular challenges for this type of organization" (p. 174). Communication plays an important role in this form of organizational leadership because leaders must rely more on social skills, persuasion, and meaning management, instead of control and power from a formal position.

Feyerherm's (1994) longitudinal study of an air pollution collaboration surface three themes for leadership behaviors for interorganizational systems: (1) surfacing or illuminating issues, (2) creating alternatives, and (3) initiating collective action. Her work demonstrates that collaboration leadership is best thought of as "a network of influence spread throughout the group" (p. 268). Communication practices become primary as leadership is exercised across the various relationships and interactions within the collaboration. Building on their previous research that developed a conceptualization of leadership issues relevant to nonprofit collaboration (Huxham & Vangen, 2000), Vangen and Huxham (2003) conceive leadership to be "the mechanism that makes things happen in collaboration" (p. 62). This involves an inherent tension between ideology and pragmatism. Therefore the essence of collaborative leadership should include both the sprit of collaboration (embracing, empowering, involving, and mobilizing) and "collaborative thuggery" (manipulating the agenda and playing politics) (Vangen & Huxham, 2003).

Finally, Goldman and Kahnweiler (2000) go as far as to develop a specific personality profile for an effective leader of nonprofit collaboration. Their study of ninety-two nonprofit executives involved in separate collaborations claims that the most successful collaboration leaders are "extravert, feeling males who have high role ambiguity and low boundary occupational stress" (p. 435). Although this research is subject to the many criticisms of leadership trait theory, it does suggest a variety of personality and demographic characteristics that can have significant influence on leadership practices in nonprofit collaborations.

Summary, Conclusions, and Future Directions

This review of past research demonstrates an inherent connection between leadership and organizational communication, both theoretically and empirically. Despite many conceptual difficulties in past leadership research (see Phills, 2004), communication scholarship offers promising new insights for this organizational phenomenon. From this perspective, leadership is assumed to be a process created through communication, not a person in a position. Leadership constitution and location become empirical questions (Drecksel, 1991) best explored through the lens of organizational communication. Many leadership perspectives have the problem of seeing almost any act of distinction as leadership and every prominent person in most groups as leaders (Scheidel, 1987). This makes leadership everything and nothing, resulting in one of the most "fragmented and disappointing bodies of research" in organizations (Phills, 2004, p. 47). A communication perspective reminds us that leadership always occurs in relationships, and it can be misleading to reduce relationships to independent factors (Thayer, 1988). As Kay (1994) reminds us, people do not experience leadership as a list of competencies.

Organizational communication scholarship offers a fruitful approach to leadership by assuming a constitutive view of human interaction and seeing leadership as a functional process of an organizing system. As Thayer (1988) points out, leadership is more like art than engineering; leadership isn't so much about building bridges as it is the bridge itself. The research reviewed here shows how communication scholarship can

extend previous thinking about leadership in organizations and suggests a more central role for communication in leadership studies.

There is still much work to be done, however. Future research needs to focus more on contemporary and alternative organizing structures, such as network organizations and IORs. Much of the early leadership literature was developed in corporate organizations structured by a traditional bureaucratic hierarchy. Globalization and technology have flattened and dispersed organizations into new structures that call for new ways of thinking about leadership communication. We know a good deal about how leadership functions up and down the hierarchy, but what about across the organization? The development of the nonprofit sector, especially nongovernmental organizations operating in foreign countries, demonstrates the need for leadership research that doesn't assume a corporate structure. The limited literature on leadership in nonprofit collaboration is beginning to confirm the value of shared and dispersed leadership practices, as well as the enactment or discourse of leadership as an important unit of analysis. More work is needed to understand the process of leadership in organizations that work together in interorganizational relationships, such as nonprofit collaborations.

From here I turn to the second focus of this literature review: stakeholder participation. In addition to the practices of leadership communication, the collaborative IORs in the nonprofit sector involve various organizations who have a stake in the organizational outcomes relating to their participation in the collaborative processes. Therefore it is important to understand the nature of stakeholder relationships and

participation, especially as they relate to organizational communication. I begin by reviewing the literature on stakeholder thinking.

Communication and Stakeholder Relationships

Stakeholder research emerged in the last 40 years as an alternative to a shareholder model of organizations. Instead of focusing primarily on shareholder value maximization, a stakeholder perspective sees the organization as a network of various groups that have a stake in organizational activity. This focus on organizational relationships should bring more attention to issues of communication, something stakeholder researchers are only recently starting to explore. A look at the background of stakeholder scholarship will provide insight into making a connection to organizational communication.

Stakeholder Background

The stakeholder perspective originally gained momentum through research in systems theory, particularly the work of Ackoff (1974) who advocated a more open systems view of organizations, which could be instrumental in helping to solve a variety of social problems by interacting with more stakeholders. This research continued to develop through the work of Dill (1975) who recognized that the trend in organizations was away from stakeholder influence and toward a focus on stakeholder participation. He also extended the stakeholder concept to groups who are thought of as having an antagonistic relationship with the organization. As Freeman and Reed (1983) point out, it was Dill's work that enabled the stakeholder perspective to be used as an overarching term for strategic management. At this point stakeholders were classified into the broad

categories of internal/external and defined narrowly, depending on whether the stakeholder was critical for the organization's survival or simply had some affect on its objectives. The momentum of this relatively new organizational perspective continued with Freeman's (1984) book *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach.* This helped to synthesized previous work and laid out the basic features of the stakeholder perspective, thus serving as the traditional starting point for contemporary stakeholder research. He defined a stakeholder as any constituent group that can affect or is affected by the organization and its objectives (Freeman, 1984).

Stakeholder Theory Development

Freeman's book laid the groundwork for an overall stakeholder perspective, but it didn't go so far as to develop any sort of theoretical foundation. It was not until the work of Donaldson and Preston (1995) that organizational scholars really started to explore the conceptual aspects of the stakeholder approach and make the turn towards theory development. They identified three key aspects of the stakeholder approach from previous literature (especially from the work of Evans & Freeman, 1993; Freeman & Gilbert, 1987; & Freeman & Reed, 1983) to serve as a theoretical starting point for stakeholder research. These include the descriptive, instrumental, and normative characteristics of the stakeholder approach, which resulted in a model that explains what the organization is, examines how certain practices of stakeholder management will impact various organizational objectives, and prescribes an ethical position the organization should follow. Jones (1995) strengthened the development of stakeholder theory by combining the stakeholder concept with behavioral science, economic theory,

and ethics, thus developing an instrumental stakeholder theory and arguing that a core set of ethical principles can give an organization a substantial competitive advantage. This work combines the instrumental and the normative by showing how ethical decisions lead to the most favorable if/then scenarios.

To guide the development of future stakeholder *theory*, Freeman (1995) coined a useful phrase: the principle of whom and what really counts. The attention of stakeholder researchers was thus directed towards issues of classification and relevance. Following this line of thinking, Mitchell, Agle, & Wood (1997) strengthened the theoretical development of the stakeholder approach with their typology of stakeholder identification and salience. They recognized that Freeman's principle begged two important questions: who are the stakeholders of the organization and who or what should managers focus on? This led Mitchell, et al. (1997) to introduce a classification of stakeholders based on three main attributes: power to influence the organization, legitimacy of the stakeholder's relationship to the organization, and urgency of the stakeholder's claim to the firm. In this regard, Mitchell, et al. (1997) proposed that stakeholder salience will be positively related to the "cumulative number of stakeholder attributes—power, legitimacy, and urgency—perceived by mangers to be present" (p. 873), and that high, low, and moderate levels of stakeholder salience will depend on the number of attributes perceived to be present by managers. A subsequent study of CEOs of 80 companies by Agle, Mitchell, and Sonnenfeld (1999) found support for this typology, with urgency as the best predictor of executive response.

Up to this point stakeholder scholarship focused almost exclusively on the perspective of organizational managers and how they perceive various stakeholders. Frooman's (1999) study was thus a welcome addition to the development of stakeholder theory because it turned attention towards stakeholders and their strategies for influencing organizations. From the perspective of Resource Dependency Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), Frooman (1999) explored what strategies are available to stakeholders to influence a particular organization. He developed a 2x2 matrix based on resource control strategies (withholding/usage) and pathways of influence (direct/indirect), with an underlying balance of power implied by the relationship that dictates which type of strategy a stakeholder will use to influence an organization (Frooman, 1999). This echoes the work of Rowley (1997) who also recognized that the relationship between organizations and stakeholders may be more than just a dyadic framework. Stakeholders not only have relationships with the organization, but also with each other.

Another important contribution to stakeholder thinking from a non-managerial perspective is the work of Deetz (1992, 1995). His stakeholder model recognizes that organizations are collections of stakeholders with competing interests, with decision-making processes that are inherently value laden. From a critical/dialogic perspective, Deetz problematizes the taken-for-granted assumptions about which stakeholder interests are represented, who has access to decision-making interactions, and the formation of social meanings that shape organizational thinking. These ideas have developed largely outside of the mainstream management literature and therefore are rarely included in the

development of stakeholder theory. Yet it is important to keep them in mind in order to extend our understanding of stakeholder theory and its connection to communication scholarship.

By now the stakeholder approach was widely accepted by organizational scholars, both in terms of social science and normative ethics. Recognizing this trend, Jones and Wicks (1999a) proposed a convergent stakeholder theory as a synthesis of normative and instrumental perspectives, which they claimed was "conceptually superior" to any stakeholder model that is exclusively normative or instrumental. This was one of the first attempts to take the stakeholder approach to the level of integrated theory, but it was met with sharp criticism from a variety of organizational scholars.

Trevino and Weaver (1999a) question whether there is even a "plausible empirical stakeholder theory, either descriptive or instrumental, to integrate with normative theory" and argue that attempts at convergent theory do "not move stakeholder research much beyond its present degree of empirical/normative integration" (p. 222). Gioia (1999a) takes this critique a step further by questioning the practicality of a convergent stakeholder theory. From his perspective, a convergent stakeholder theory is saying little more to managers than "be ethical and instrumental (i.e. profitable) at the same time," and he questions if this would be anything new to practitioners. Sundaram and Inkpen (2005) raise a similar critique when they say that "well-meaning sentiments are not guidelines for decision making" (p. 370).

Freeman's (1999) criticism comes from a slightly different perspective, saying that stakeholder research has no need for the Donaldson and Preston (1995) typology

(descriptive, instrumental, and normative) in the first place, thus no need for a theory of convergence. This is because it is contradictory to speak of a descriptive theory that is value-free (normative) and difficult to think of normative theory without some sort of instrumental claim (Freeman, 1999). The distinctions between descriptive, instrumental, and normative collapse into a pragmatic approach that is inherently value-laden and obviously descriptive. The result is more *divergent* stakeholder narratives, and theory comes from stories about these narratives (Freeman, 1999). Donaldson (1999) takes yet another approach in responding to the convergent stakeholder theory proposal by claiming it doesn't go far enough. He wants to take the next step and identify the "conceptual glue" that is strong enough to "bind the separate methodological strands of stakeholder theory into a whole," especially the instrumental and the normative (p. 237).

Jones and Wicks (1999b) respond to all these criticisms by suggesting that they were simply advocating that stakeholder research would be more effective if the focus was on convergence of the descriptive, instrumental, and normative aspects instead of studying them in isolation. Trevino and Weaver (1999b) think it might be best to only speak of the "stakeholder research tradition," rather than stakeholder theory per se. Freeman (1999) thinks that the focus should be on instrumental stakeholder theory (per Jones, 1995) with no attempt to combine stakeholder narratives that should be understood separately, and Gioia (1999b) prefers to call a truce between the various perspectives and allow organizational scholars to decide the value of stakeholder "theory" on their own.

Current Stakeholder Research

Moving on from the attention given to stakeholder research in the late 90s, scholars appear to go in two general directions. First, some continue to develop the conceptual foundations of a stakeholder theory, such as the complexity of stakeholder identities and the predictive aspects of certain stakeholder situations. All these studies function to develop the theoretical status of stakeholder thinking and strengthen its conceptual foundation. Second, scholars simply use a general stakeholder perspective as a starting point or supplement to organizational scholarship in other areas. None of these studies try to advance a particular "theory" of stakeholders, but instead use the essential concepts of the "stakeholder research tradition" (Trevino & Weaver, 1999a) to investigate and understand other relevant organizational research topics. Table 2 summarizes current stakeholder research in these two directions.

From this thorough understanding of stakeholder thinking and research development we are now in a position to connect the stakeholder perspective to organizational communication. The link between stakeholder research and communication has been implied from the beginning, yet a substantive investigation into this connection has been lacking. The time has come to move stakeholder research beyond the focus of business ethics and fiduciary responsibilities to a focus on how communication functions in stakeholder relationships. There have been a few whispers in the stakeholder literature; the next step is to demonstrate the significance of communication in stakeholder research and outline specific areas for exploration.

Communication and Stakeholder Research

Within the context of organizational communication, a limited number of scholars are trying to move stakeholder thinking past one-way models of linear communication towards dynamic models of dialogue and information exchange. One-way models of communication temp us to believe organizations can control the message and its interpretation. Yet in many ways there is a dialogic nature to meaning-making (Crane & Livesey, 2003); meaning is not simply transferred to stakeholders, but also created through dialogue with the organization. This elevates the status of stakeholder communication from a peripheral process of message transmission to a central feature in the relationships between organizational stakeholders, their understanding each other, and the way those understandings influence decision-making. From this perspective, stakeholders are the "drivers of a new strategic discourse leading to the formation of a strategy that is no longer merely responsive, but which is in fact proactive in its efforts to create greater value" (Pesqueux & Damak-Ayaki, 2005, p. 16). This long-term perspective is in contrast to previous management strategies fixed in the organization's short-term activity.

Much of this is rooted in recent work challenging the empirical status of various stakeholders, arguing that stakeholder identities are social constructed through language and human interaction. Winn (2001) explains how many stakeholder groups are composed of people with shifting roles and interests, which warrants an increased emphasis on investigating the variability of situations contexts. Crane and Livesey (2003) also point out that stakeholder research has yet to consider the "constitutive

effects of language and their consequences for stakeholder identity" (p. 46). They present a differentiated stakeholder model that recognizes the complex, ambiguous, and shifting relationships between and within organizations. The complexity of stakeholder identity indicates the need for organizations to conceptualize stakeholder communication not simply as a process of information exchange, but also the constitution of meaning itself (Crane & Livesey, 2003). Communication as dialogue becomes the central feature for creating, sustaining, and building stakeholder relationships.

As Bendell (2003) points out, the interest in stakeholder dialogue emerges from changing perspectives about the role of the modern corporation in society. The development of technology, the rise of the professional investor, the reality of globalization, and the prevalence of news media all situate today's organizations in close proximity to other organizations and interest groups. Organizational decisions are quickly known and have far-reaching implications for many across the globe, thus a greater need for organizations to be in consistent dialog with a variety of stakeholders. Rowley (1997) also notes that in order to build a legitimate stakeholder theory of organizations, researchers must move beyond the examination of dyadic relationships. This means distinguishing between dialogue as a two-way interaction for the purpose of persuasion and compliance gaining and dialogue as "genuine symmetric practice" (Crane & Livesey, 2003). Kent and Taylor (2002) explain that philosophers and rhetoricians recognize dialogue as one of the most ethical forms of communication, especially based on Buber's (1948) early work on reciprocity, mutuality, involvement, and openness. These ideas could help shape a more substantive stakeholder theory.

Practically speaking, the process of stakeholder dialogue calls for attention on at least two primary subjects: listening and participation. Scholes and Clutterbuck (1998) claim that most of what qualifies as stakeholder communication involves outgoing messages from the organization to various stakeholders. They argue that if communication is to be taken seriously in stakeholder relationships, there should be an equal emphasis on *listening* to stakeholders, i.e. opportunities for feedback and genuine response on the part of various stakeholders. If organizations and researchers are going to get serious about stakeholder communication, we have to move past the idea of simply creating and transmitting messages. We have to study the entire communication process, half of which involves the other side(s) of the sender-receiver equation.

Additionally, a focus on communication in stakeholder relationships also involves looking at how various stakeholders participate in the decision-making process. Much of the literature on organizational change, for example, points to the value of employee participation in the change process; employees being one of the most important stakeholders for any organization. Bordia, Hobman, Jones, Cindy, and Callan (2004) claim that participation is positively associated with perceptions of fairness during organizational change; having a say in changes that affect them gives employees the resiliency to cope with the uncertainly during the change process. This is just one example of how participation can have a significant influence on stakeholder relationships in an organization. Others may include how organizations allow clients to participate in the development of new products, how government regulators and watchdog groups participate in organizational accountability, or how key volunteers

participate in the decision-making process of nonprofit organizational strategy. Participation is an important application of communication in stakeholder relationships and an area that could benefit from scholarly investigation (I provide a more thorough review of the participation literature in the next section).

Summary and Conclusions

In addition to the legal and moral obligations of organizations (Phillips, 2003), it is important to see the relational nature of today's organizational society. Not just interpersonal relationships within an organization, but also the macro-level relationships that exist between an organization and the complex network of various stakeholders whose connections are vital for organizational success. Even though communication is crucial to the study of any relationship, scholarly investigation into the study of communication has been lacking in stakeholder research. Table 3 highlights the few recent examples in the literature that explore stakeholder communication, but there is still much to learn.

We need to know more about how communication functions to create and develop relationships between organizational stakeholders; not only through message construction and transmission, but also listening, participation, and many other characteristics of the communication process. It is also important know what effects communication has in stakeholder relationships and how stakeholder communication relates to organizational success. The final section of this literature review investigates the concept of participation and its relationship to organizational communication.

Participation

From here I turn attention towards another important phenomenon in organizational communication that is relevant to collaborative IORs in the nonprofit sector: participation, especially as it relates to decision making and empowerment of collaboration stakeholders. Participation refers to a process where influence in organizations is shared among people who occupy different hierarchical positions (Locke & Schweiger, 1979). It involves interaction with several people throughout an organizational structure, especial key decision makers (Marshall & Stohl, 1993).

Participation is closely related to other concepts in the organizational communication literature, such as workplace democracy (Cheney, 1995, Cheney et al., 1998) and employee involvement (Cotton, 1993), although there are slight differences. Workplace democracy usually refers to on overall organizational philosophy or ideal, whereas participation could be one of many practices that characterize a democratic workplace. Employee involvement tends to imply a managerial tactic based on an instrumental view of organizations that privileges effectiveness and productivity (Fairhurst & Wendt, 1993), using participation as part of that larger strategy. In general, participation is recognized as the communication practices and interactions that produce cooperative associations (Stohl, 1995).

As previously mentioned, globalization and technology are changing organizational systems from vertical hierarchies to flatter structures, which allow broader participation of more organizational members in key decisions and processes. Participation is significant to the study of organizational communication because of its

locus within a context of organized social systems and its reliance on human interaction. Participation is "inherently communicative," whatever meaning is given to participation, it implies a form of "specialized interaction" (Stohl, 1993, p. 100-101).

Also, participation in organizations almost always involves some form of decision making (Seibold & Shea, 2001) or empowerment (Marshall & Stohl, 1993), so these concepts are woven throughout my review. I begin with a look at theories and models that guide participation research, followed by a review of empirical studies and outcomes relevant to participation and organizational communication.

Participation Theories and Models

One important theory that shapes participation research is Olson's (1965) theory of collective action. This theory has many applications, particularly in economics and social policy. The relevant aspects for organizational communication scholarship involve a focus on the mutual interests of organizational members and the benefits gained from coordinated activity. Flanagin, Stohl, and Bimber (2006) demonstrate that collective action is essentially a communicative activity, and organizations provide the foundation for collective action by providing the necessary structure, resources, and context for collective goals. Flanagin et al. (2006) present a two-dimensional model of "collective action space" that classifies collective action in terms of interaction mode (personal/impersonal) and engagement mode (institutional/entrepreneurial). This results in a clear understanding of how and why participation functions in organizations through human communication.

Since the 1970s, Bernstein's (1976) conditions for meaningful participation have also guided organizational communication research. He indicates five characteristics that should be present for any form of organizational participation to have substantial value: (1) adequate employee access to management-level information, (2) employee protection from reprisals, (3) independent arbitrator to resolve disputes, (4) participatory-democratic consciousness, and (5) employees share in the profits resulting from participation. Although this list is not an actual *theory* about organizational participation, it does give a valid starting point for communication research and theory development. Building off this research, Dachler and Wilpert (1978) outlined four orientations toward participation in organizations--production and efficiency, democratic, human growth and development, and socialist—that can help researchers understand how to approach participative processes.

Miller and Monge (1986) also provide a helpful framework for understanding participation research. Their literature review identifies three types of theoretical models of participation in organizations: cognitive, affective, and contingency. Cognitive models see participation as a process of information flow and acquisition. These models assume that workers usually have more information about their work than managers, so communicating with them about key decisions will improve productivity. Conversely, workers who participate in decisions will do a better job of implementing those decisions (see Anthony, 1978; Frost, Wakely, & Ruth, 1974; Maier, 1963; Melcher, 1976 for examples of cognitive models). Affective models suggest that participation helps satisfy the "higher-order needs" of workers, such as self-esteem, self-worth, and authority

(Miller & Monge, 1986; Ritchie & Miles, 1970). This human relations perspective on participation sees participation as valuable in and of itself because of its influence on worker satisfaction and morale. Finally, contingency models claim that participation will affect worker productivity and satisfaction differently depending on situational and personality constraints (Vroom, 1960; Vroom & Yetton, 1973; Vroom & Jago, 1978). In these models, participation will depend on the nature of the decision and the people involved.

Within the context of small group participation, Bonito (2003) highlights two perspectives that explain how small group members perceive those who participate in the decision making process. First, expectations states theory (Wagner and Berger 1997) claims that members form consistent expectations about how others will participate based on "heuristic processing of social information," such as race, social status, organizational rank, etc. (Bonito, 2003, p. 83). Second, a local management model assumes that assessments of participation are based on the communication and interaction between members. Bonito's (2003) research found support for both these models, indicating that participation in small groups is both a function of heuristic and linguistic behavior.

In terms of actual decision making and participation, Eisenberg, Murphy, and Andrews (1998) present a tripartite model based on Martin's (1992) model of organizational culture. Eisenberg et al. (1998) demonstrate how organizational decisions can be classified as integrative, differentiation, or fragmentation. Integrative decisions are monolithic and consistent across participants; differentiated decisions contain multiple perspectives, with consensus existing only among sub-sectors of participants;

and fragmented decisions magnify ambiguity and achieve no level of consensus among participants. These three perspectives can function as "rhetorical resources" for participation in organizations.

Additionally, O'Reilly, Chatman, and Anderson (1987) present an integrated model of decision making where information flow and decision making are understood as one process. In this model, the communication of information flow becomes the antecedent for decision making, while the results of decision making simultaneously become the antecedents for information flow. O'Reilly et al. (1987) also highlight a paradox that emerges in decision making: decision makers tend to seek more information than is required for a decision, creating an information overload; this overload can paralyze or overwhelm their decision making, but it also makes them more confident about their decisions. Therefore participants in the decision-making process may make poorer decisions, but they will feel more certain about those decisions.

This idea of paradox is a central theme for Stohl and Cheney (2001), who show that participation in organizations can be fraught with inconsistencies and apparent contradictions (i.e., "be spontaneous and creative, just like we planned"). Paradoxes of structure, agency, identity, and power emerge as organizational members participate in decision-making processes and collective goal achievement. These paradoxes come from tensions between individual motivations of participants and the organizational structure that shapes participation. Paradoxes are not necessarily a bad thing, but if they need to be resolved it can happen through communication. Synthesis and reframing are two ways

that Stohl and Cheney (2001) suggest communication can be used to make sense of paradoxes that develop from organizational participation.

Another important aspect of participation in organizations involves the function of technology in mediating the participation process. Fulk and Collins-Jarvis (2002) review three theoretical perspectives that guide our thinking about technology and participation, summarized below:

(1) Structuration Theories: participants shape the medium as the medium shapes the participants, based on Giddens' (1984) "duality of structure." These include Adaptive Structuration Theory (AST) (Desanctis & Poole, 1994), which emphasizes the social aspects of technology and how social perceptions influence the way technology is used; and Self-Organizing Systems Theory (Contractor & Seibold, 1993), which extends AST by providing boundary conditions based on complexity science.

(2) Media Capacity Theories: different media have different capacities to utilize various communication cues. Social Presence Theory (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976) explains how a medium's ability to display nonverbal cues influences its social presence. Media Richness Theory (Daft & Lengel, 1984) states that media's richness depends on its ability to communicate multiple cues, feelings/emotions, and information speed.

(3) Input-Process-Output Theories: Input variables significantly affect meeting processes, which in turn affect meeting outcomes. Time, Interaction, and Performance Theory (McGrath & Hollingshead, 1994) classifies communication

as idea generation, intellective, judgment, or task negotiation by order of complexity; more complex tasks require richer media.

These categories of media theories help us understand how communication technologies function within the process of organizational participation. As technology develops throughout the 21st century and organizational systems involve more participative decision making, this will be an important area for organizational communication scholarship.

Research Findings

There is a considerable body of empirical literature on participation in organizations, far beyond the scope of this study. Thankfully, substantial reviews of the participation literature already exist, which enable me to reference the consensus of knowledge in other organizational fields (management, industrial psychology, etc.) and focus specifically on issues of organizational communication.

By far, the most measured outcomes in participation research are productivity and satisfaction, but the results of research investigating these variables are somewhat mixed. Locke and Schwieger (1979) provide one of the earliest, most comprehensive reviews of participation research. They conclude that participation has little, if any, effect on organizational productivity, and a positive, but marginal influence on worker satisfaction. A few years later Miller and Monge (1986) conducted a similar meta-analysis and came up with related conclusions: participation has a small effect on productivity and satisfaction, with the influence on satisfaction somewhat stronger. They found no support for contingency models of participation, but their data did favor affective models

slightly more than cognitive models[4]. Marshall and Stohl (1993) found inconsistency among studies on participation and satisfaction. Their review highlights studies that found both positive, weak, and no relationship between participation and satisfaction. The most recent review of participation research comes from Wagner (1994), who concludes: "participation can have statistically significant effects on [productivity] and satisfaction, but the average size of these effects is small enough to raise concerns about practical significance" (p. 312). Cotton (1995) and Sagie (1995) both take exception to Wagner's (1994) conclusions and question the validity of his methodology, but Wagner (1995) stood by his assessment in response to their critique. The consensus seems to be that participation does influence productivity and satisfaction to a limited degree (with a slightly stronger relationship between participation and satisfaction), but more needs to be known about other mediating factors that influence these relationships.

Another important aspect of participation in organizations involves empowerment. In their attempt to isolate the "inherent communication nature of participation within an organization," Marshall and Stohl (1993, p. 137) identified empowerment as one of the primary components of participation. This happens as organizational members are granted power and take advantage of opportunities presented to them within the system. Their data confirm a positive relationship between participation and empowerment in relation to performance and satisfaction (Marshall & Stohl, 1993). Chiles and Zorn (1995) also demonstrate how empowerment is a function of organizational communication, with several sources of empowerment that can result

[4] See previous discussion of cognitive, affective, and contingency models of participation.

from participation. The overall conclusion is that involving people in the participation process can lead to empowerment, which can have a valuable impact throughout the organization.

Other participation research that focuses specifically on communication has examined how people adapt messages in participation frameworks (Bonito & Wolski, 2002), how message channels influence participation in collective action organizations (Collins-Jarvis, 1997), the role of communication assertiveness and participation in relation to burnout among nurses (Ellis & Miller, 1993), a communication network approach to participation (Marshall & Stohl, 1993), intercultural communication and interpretations of participation (Stohl, 1993), and participation in organizational information commons (Yuan & Fulk, 2005).

Results from these empirical studies point to a number of important conclusions. First, the social framework and communication channels involved in participation have an important influence on how participants align with organizational goals and the quality of collective action. Second, the nature of communication in participation (i.e., assertive, passive) can affect workers' emotional exhaustion and commitment. Additionally, we should not understand the process of participation apart from reference to the communication culture in which the organization is located. Finally, worker motivation to participate in information sharing is a more of a social (vs. individual) process that is facilitated through organizational communication. This research demonstrates the significance of communication throughout the process of participation.

Stakeholder Participation

Hanna (2000) explains the double-edged sword of stakeholder participation. On the one hand, participation presents the opportunity for all stakeholders to have their interests and concerns represented in the final decision product. On the other, participation can be limiting because there are complicated issues of who participates, to what extent, and what interests are represented. Despite these complications, Deetz (2005) claims that research consistently favors participative decision-making models over traditional hierarchies (see Seibold & Shea, 2001; Cheney, et al., 1998; Lawler, 1999; McLagan & Nel, 1995). The issue is not just whether or not stakeholders participate, but rather what Deetz (2005) calls the "forms and practices" of participation (p. 18). What does participation look like and how to various stakeholders perceive their participation experiences? As Gray (1989) points out, stakeholder participation is not just about having a place to argue stakeholder interests, but instead an opportunity to make a substantive contribution to the decision-making process. This means linking participation to specific objectives that stakeholders recognize and value.

In the context of nonprofit collaboration and community planning, Hibbard and Lurie (2000) confirm that over twenty-five years of planning theory has demonstrated that community planning should be participatory (see Friedmann, 1973; Yiftachel, 1998; Sandercock, 1998). They also demonstrate the connection between communication and stakeholder participation in the planning process:

> "Planning is best understood more as communicative action than as technical analysis (Forester 1989; Healy 1996). It is supported by empirical studies of practice that have

found that planners spend more time and psychic energy working to communicate effectively with a wide range of colleagues and publics than on analysis and logical argumentation (Innes 1994; Ozawa and Seltzer 1999)" (Hibbard and Lurie, 2000, p. 187) This has important implications for nonprofit collaboration, which involves various stakeholders who participate in a number of decision-making processes. Collaboration stakeholders bring a number of interests and motivations to the table, and the productivity of the collaboration and the satisfaction of the stakeholders depends on the communication practices that facilitate their participation.

Summary, Conclusions, and Future Directions

The research on participation seems to suggest an important connection between participation and organizational communication, though the nature of this relationship remains unclear. To summarize, participation is a communicative process guided by organizational structures that is influenced by social factors and organizational goals. Although some of the research findings are inconsistent, we do know that participation is related to productivity and satisfaction to some degree. Participation has an inherent connection to decision making and information flow in organizations and can be an important factor in worker empowerment. Within small groups, participation is guided by both heuristic and linguistic behavior, and technology is becoming a vital component of participation as organizations develop in the 21st century. The practice of participation in organizations may involve several forms of paradox, but communication helps us understand these tensions and solve them when needed. As organizations involve more people from various levels in the decision-making process it is critical to understand how

participation functions in these situations. Furthermore, as globalization and technology change the structures of modern organizations, organizations need to know how participation can assist in goal achievement and influence the dispositions of their workers.

Future research needs to address the inconsistencies in productivity/satisfaction research. Much of this past research was done outside the field of communication; perhaps attention to communication variables will uncover moderating and mediating factors in the relationship between participation and productivity/satisfaction. Even if the participation-productivity relationship continues to be weak, future research might be able to establish a connection between satisfaction and productivity, providing a path for participation's influence on productivity. Furthermore, much of the participation literature has developed in corporate environments of command and control that may be at odds with the philosophy of participation. Therefore scholars should turn towards organizational structures that are inherently participative, such as collaborative IORs, to further investigate these phenomena. This may help bridge the gap between well-intended conceptualizations of participation and the limited and benign empirical findings.

It would also be valuable to explore participation's influence on factors other than productivity and satisfaction, such as the quality of participative decisions. In contrast to variable analytic studies that measure productivity and satisfaction quantitatively, future research could compare the quality of decisions resulting from participation versus non-participative decisions making. Qualitative case studies may help us understand the

overall processes and results of participative vs. non-participative decision making. Participation will be strengthened as a concept if it can be show to influence a wider variety of important organizational outcomes.

In line with the first part of this review, research should also explore the role of leadership in participation. How does leadership encourage, facilitate, or hinder participation? Are there specific functions of leadership in participation, or certain participative processes inherent in leadership, and how do these all relate to communication? Hirokawa and Keyton (1995) found that leadership was an antecedent to group-level participation, and I suspect there are many more relevant connections between participation and leadership because both involve dynamic interaction processes within the context of organizational goal achievement.

Lastly, in addition to the need for more longitudinal studies, future communication research should develop a more message-centered approach to participation. Do certain types of messages relate to particular aspects of participation? Specific message typologies could be developed and connected to various characteristics and outcomes of the participation process. This would be a unique contribution of communication scholarship to participation research and would strengthen the perspective of participation as an inherently communicative phenomenon.

Overall Conclusions and Research Questions

This literature review suggests several conclusions about leadership and stakeholder participation that are relevant to the study of collaborative IORs in the

nonprofit sector. From these emerge important research questions that shape the present study.

Collaborative IOR Leadership Communication

Interorganizational collaboration immediately raises questions about leadership because there is less clarity about the lines of authority and influence. Organizational roles can be more complex in IOR collaborations than in hierarchical and single-organization arrangements (Heide, 1994), and the frequent ambiguity of collaborative partners can complicate the authority structure and decision-making capacity of collaborative IORs (Huxham & Vangen, 2000). This certainly does not mean that collaboration is non-existent in hierarchical organizations, but rather the interorganizational dynamics of collaborative IORs complicate traditional understandings of authority and influence. Collaboration members associate with each other through informal (and usually voluntary) connections that are rarely controlled by superior/subordinate relationships. Yet collaboration still requires influence towards goal achievement in order to make progress. Therefore the present study sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What is leadership in collaborative IORs?

RQ1a: How does leadership facilitate collective action in collaborative IORs without a formal authority structure?

Stakeholder Participation

At a conceptual level, collaborative IORs appear to be inherently participatory structures that necessitate the involvement of multiple stakeholders. Yet much of the

literature focuses on participation as a static variable (participation/non participation) instead of a "dynamic, interactive process" (Marshall & Stohl, 1993, p. 137). The majority of previous participation research also presumes a formal employee/employer relationship and looks at how subordinate employees are included in upper-level decision making. Furthermore, the participation of multiple stakeholders with various interests would suggest the potential for conflict and tension, especially in communication and interaction. Therefore the following research questions about stakeholder participation were investigated:

RQ2: What is the nature of stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs?

RQ3: What communicative tensions emerge from the participation of multiple stakeholders is collaborative IORs?

Stakeholder Interest Representation

Finally, collaborative IORs involve interests of multiple stakeholders, which are represented through a variety of communication processes. Yet there is a multi-layered nature to collaborative IORs that complicates the distinctions between individual and collective interests and how these might be represented. Therefore a final set of research questions guided the present study:

RQ4: Whose interests do stakeholders represent in collaborative IORs?

RQ4a: How are these interests represented?

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This chapter presents the research methodology used for collecting an analyzing data in order to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 2. This also includes an overview of the research site and participants for the study. The study utilized a qualitative methodology of participant observations and semi-structured interviews to understand leadership communication and stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs. This inductive methodology is justified because of the exploratory nature of the research questions and the need to examine actual communication practices. These aspects of grounded theory (Strauss, & Corbin, 1994) are useful because they allow the researcher to remain open to unexpected data and allow theory to emerge from the data, not necessarily from pre-defined categories.

Research Site

Data for this research were collected from the Community Action Network (CAN), a private/public partnership of fifteen major community collaborations (summarized in Table 4) working to enhance the health and well being of Austin and Travis County Texas. As stated on their website[5], the CAN's mission is "To achieve sustainable social, health, educational and economic outcomes through engaging the community in a planning and implementation process that coordinates and optimizes public, private and individual actions and resources." The CAN's stated goals are to increase awareness, provide information, develop strategies, and mobilize partners

[5] See www.caction.org/about/index.htm

towards improving community well being. The CAN focuses on engaging the community in a planning and implementation process that optimizes public and private resources to achieve measurable change. The CAN provides a community forum for creative and collaborative problem solving, inclusive community participation, and consensus building. The CAN utilizes a variety of tools to achieve their mission, including ongoing assessments of community conditions, resources and needs; reviews and evaluations processes to determine the most effective use of resources; and community action plans that specify strategies for using resources to create positive change. The CAN also operates as the local social equity structure to deal with issues related to community sustainability, gentrification, regional growth, poverty, and community capacity building[6].

This interorganizational network of collaborative partners began in 1981 as an informal relationship between four partner agencies: the school district, the city, the county, and the mental health board. Fifteen years later the network included twelve organizations. Next the CAN developed a more formal organizational arrangement and hired their first executive director. The CAN is now comprised of multiple collaborative IORs among nonprofit organizations and city/county agencies that focus on seventeen community issue areas (summarized Appendix A). Currently the CAN is structured around six interdependent planning committees and councils that oversee the primary activities for the various collaborative partnerships. These include the administrative

[6] Most of this background information can be found on the CAN's website at www.caction.org. Other information was obtained from misc. CAN documents obtained through personal contact with the CAN associate director.

team, the community council, the resource council, the executive committee, the assessment and planning team, and the marketing committee. The CAN is directed by the resource council, which is a board of appointed volunteers from various private collaborations, government agencies business groups, and educational institutions. All the planning committees and councils work together to compile and disseminate information, develop community action plans, and apply best practices to achieve sustainable solutions.

These councils and committees oversee and facilitate several collaborative partnerships (known as "Interest Area Groups") that operate throughout the city and county. They include collaborations like the Basic Needs Coalition, the Literacy Coalition, the Victim Services Taskforce, and the Aging Services Council. Most of the Interest Area Groups (IAGs) have standing monthly meetings for the member organizations. The CAN is involved in all these IAGs to some degree. For some they help facilitate meetings and record meeting minutes; for others they simply keep their website updated and attend meetings as a neutral observer. The CAN also oversees a bi-monthly meeting for all IAG leaders to encourage interaction and information sharing among the IAGs and their collaborative efforts.

Essentially, the CAN operates as a planning body that coordinates the activities of multiple collaborative IORs working on different issue areas. The CAN itself only has four paid employees and a small office, yet it helps oversee the community planning for a large metropolitan city and the surrounding county. Members of various Issue Area Groups have full-time jobs with other nonprofit organizations and city agencies. The

strength of the network is in its interorganizational relationships, not its physical infrastructure. Therefore organizational relationships and communicative action are key to the development and success of this network.

The CAN is an excellent research site for this study for several reasons. First, the CAN's leadership structure appears to be distributed and complex. Although the CAN has an executive director, many of the collaborative partners are chairs of their respective collaborations and executive directors of their home organizations. Leadership appears to be multi-layered throughout this complex network, raising important questions and influence and authority. Second, the CAN recently went through a leadership transition; they hired a new executive director. This situation should bring to the forefront many important leadership issues as the new executive director evaluates past leadership dynamics and CAN members adjust to a new executive director. As expected, I witnessed much comparing/contrasting between executive directors that yielded important information about leadership. Finally, the CAN is inherently participatory. The CAN's website (www.caction.org) makes many claims about the involvement of diverse stakeholders throughout the community. In additional to listing all their collaborative partners, CAN's website talks about "inclusive community participation and consensus building," "community collaborative efforts," and "the CAN values inclusiveness." Therefore many dynamics of participation are functioning throughout these interorganizational relationships. CAN is a research site comprised of multiple IORs, making it an excellent setting to explore the communication processes of leadership and stakeholder participation and answer the research questions proposed in

Chapter two. This post-bureaucratic, network organization of collaborative IORs can help re-orient our thinking about these organizational topics and make a valuable contribution to the development of organizational communication theory.

Data Collection

Data for this study came from two primary sources: observations of multiple CAN meetings and interviews with a sampling of CAN members. Various CAN documents (i.e., meeting minutes, flyers, listserv emails, etc.) were used to supplement my understanding of the observations and interviews as a measure of interpretive validity. Each of the CAN's six planning committees holds monthly meetings to share information and discuss various issues. I secured permission from CAN's associate director to attend these meetings for the duration of this project. This involved extensive field notes and attention to the leadership and participation practices of meeting attendees. This form of naturalistic inquiry allowed me to investigate leadership and stakeholder participation as they ordinarily occur in collaborative IOR meetings. This also helped me acclimate to the daily workings of the CAN and the issues/terminology common among the members. The research questions and topics from chapter two guided my observations at these meetings, though I was also open to new topics and ideas as they emerged in meetings. After each meeting I transcribed my field notes, resulting in 85 pages of single-spaced text. Overall I spent 70 hours in the field attending 35 different meetings. Appendix B indicates my meeting observation schedule.

The second aspect of data collection involved semi-structured interviews with members of the CAN. These consisted of both ethnographic and informant (Lindlof &

Taylor, 2002) interviews in order to capture informal interactions and important features of the leadership and participation dynamics of the CAN. I used quota and snowball sampling techniques to stratify different types of interview participants in order to ensure a broad range of CAN representation. My sample included people from all the fifteen partner organizations, representatives from each CAN planning body, and representatives from each Issue Area Group. This enabled me to achieve variation and a thorough representation of CAN participants. Overall I conducted 53 interviews with CAN members of various affiliations; 34% (n=18) of the interviewees were male, 66% (n=35) of the interviewees were female. All the interview participants had full-time jobs at a home organization while also serving as a representative to some aspect of the CAN, either a planning committee or an Issue Area Group (except the three interviewees who worked for the CAN full time). All had been connected with the CAN for at least one year; some have been involved since its inception over fifteen years ago. Interview participants were solicited through personal contact and recommendations from CAN members. All interviews took place during the participant's free time, either in public places or their offices. In compliance with Human Subjects procedures, informed consent was obtained prior to each interview. Appendix C describes my interview sample.

The interviews followed a general guide of questions (see Appendix D), though I allowed flexibility for probing questions not specified on the interview protocol. In this regard, the protocol was used to cultivate, not restrict, the topics of discussion (Gossett, 2002). Also, I revisited the interview protocol after every tenth interview to make any

necessary revisions to ensure the research questions were on target. The interviews averaged 60 minutes in length and were recorded digitally for transcription and analysis, resulting in 663 pages or single-spaced text[7].

As a supplement to the meeting observations and interviews, I also reviewed a number of CAN documents, press releases, and media coverage in order to more fully understand the dynamic of the CAN. I paid special attention to the intended audiences of these documents and what they revealed about leadership and participation in the CAN. For example, how these documents invited or discouraged participation, and how they established or reinforced certain patterns of leadership. Although not the primary focus of my investigation, these documents helped me understand the CAN in greater depth and contextualize my observations and interviews; they served as a valuable cross-checking (Browning, et al., 1995) resource. For example, if an interview participant describe something that happened in a particular meeting, I would go back and look at the minutes from that meeting. Or if someone at a meeting referenced a particular report, I would look at the report.

After ten months of interviews and observations I recognized that the field work had become "theoretically saturated" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 110), meaning that new observations and interviews were adding little value to the concepts under investigation and my explanation of the data. This was also a good time to leave the field because it represented a natural break within the CAN: it was the end of the year and many people completed their tenures in various collaboration positions (i.e., committee chairs, etc.);

[7] Interviews were transcribed by Katz Transcription (www.katztranscription.biz) and funded by a grant from the North American Case Research Association.

there also was an end-of-the-year celebration that served as a marker to end the CAN's annual activities and look towards next year. This also met Snow's (1980) three-pronged test of information sufficiency to justify leaving the field: taken-for-grantedness, theoretical saturation, and heightened confidence. After ten months and 53 interviews I became very familiar with these CAN meeting, I was no longer observing phenomena that added substantially to my data analysis, and I had an increased confidence in my data because I was hearing many of the same ideas across meeting and interviews. At this point I contacted all the interviewees and people I had met at various meetings to let them know I would be leaving the field and focusing on data analysis.

Data Analysis and Validation

I used a computer program called ATLAS.ti for all my data analysis. This is a qualitative data analysis (QDA) software program that is useful for large bodies of textual data. It is recognized as an industry leader for field note and transcription analysis (Lewins & Silver, 2007). The interview transcriptions and meeting observation data were analyzed using a two-step coding procedure. A summary of my data coding categories can be found in Appendix E. The first step involved a system of *open coding* (see Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Browning, 1978) where the data were considered in detail to develop initial emergent categories. As Owen (1984) prescribed, the focus in this stage of analysis is on the repetition, forcefulness, and recurrence of comments in the data. I read through each transcript several times and coded all interview responses and field notes based on the general theme(s) they exhibited. I also wrote several analytic memos during this stage in order to help define the themes and make sense of my initial

readings. I continued this process until all incidents in the transcripts were assigned to an emergent open code. The result of this stage was a list of 162 subcategories relating to leadership communication and stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs that guided the more focused second stage of coding.

The second stage involved *focused coding* (Lofland & Lofland, 1995), where the initial subcategories were examined for congruence and collapsed into broader categories and meta-themes. For example, the initial subcategories of "big picture," "anticipation," "pay attention," "foresight," and "see ahead" were collapsed into a broader category of "vision." This category system was then used to go back and recode the original transcript data. Following the constant comparison method of qualitative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Cobin, 1994), data were then analyzed to ensure that transcript comments not only represented the initial categories of the open coding stage, but also the meta-themes of the focused coding stage. This resulted in sixteen broader categories that emerged from the data, each represented by several sub-categories. These broader categories were further collapsed using similar processes of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Cobin, 1994), resulting in five meta-themes that are the focus of this analysis. As an additional measure of validation, I also made certain that all the coded data were represented at the sub- and meta-category levels.

These methods also provide a measure of triangulation because comments from interview transcriptions could be compared with field note observations and CAN documents. This means that most of the data could be evaluated in relation to at least one

other data source. For example, certain interview participants would describe the tension they felt between talk and action in the CAN. During meetings I would then observe these same people express these frustrations, either verbally or nonverbally. This method of triangulation added a level of depth to my analysis and helped strengthen the validity of my results.

When triangulation was not possible (and even at times when it was), two other important steps were taken to strengthen the validity of this data analysis. First, I conducted a negative case analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to ensure there were not any data that directly refuted my analysis. This was done by going back to the data throughout the project in order to see if there were any instances that contradicted the developing results. I also did a negative case analysis after my initial codes and results were developed as a further check on the data. I identified three specific interviews with several responses that countered some of the initial claims of my analysis. For example, some of these interviewees were much more skeptical and cynical about collaboration in the CAN, so I had to revise my original results to balance the optimism and idealism displayed by the majority of other interviewees. There were also contradictory observations in some of my field notes, so I had to make sure that I included these tensions in the results of my analysis. For example, in many of my observations I noted how the invited presentations were dry, boring, and did not advocate a specific position or request. However, I did have a few observations where this was not the case; the invited presentation was engaging, interesting, and made a specific request or statement to the committee. I had to reconcile these negative cases with my general observation

that the invited presentations were largely ineffective. I looked at the circumstances of these presentations and decided that they were substantial exceptions from the norm that did not invalidate my overall conclusions about invited presentations.

Second, I performed a member validation test (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) in order to find out whether or not the CAN members agreed with my findings. This is also referred to as host verification (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), or member tests of validity (Douglas, 1976). The purpose of this step is to identify any discrepancies between the results of my data analysis and the perceptions of the participants involved in the research. After completing a final draft of my analysis, I emailed every interviewee my results chapter to solicit their feedback. Member validation does not necessarily privilege the opinions of the participants above the insights gained through data analysis, so I did not substantially alter my findings as a result of the feedback I received. The majority of the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, such as this comment from a CAN member: "The tensions stuff was great. The idea of focus vs. inclusion is right on. Knowing that these tensions are normal makes me realize that I'm not crazy" (Theresa). At this point I have heard back from several interview participants, but no one has any feedback that contradicts or challenges the overall substance of my conclusions.

Summary

This method of data collection helped determine specific enactments of leadership communication and stakeholder participation, how these are perceived by collaboration members, and the influence these communication practices have on the overall

collaborative IOR. Overall this research methodology will give us a better understanding of not only how leaders communicate, but also what types of communication are recognized as leadership and how communication is used to facilitate leadership processes within collaborative IORs. This methodology will also help us understand the nature of stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs and how their interests are represented. Finally, this inductive research methodology helps develop grounded theory about leadership communication and stakeholder participation, which in turn will lead to more accurate leadership models to help us understand these important phenomena in collaborative IORs.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the analysis described in chapter three and answer the research questions developed in chapter two. The research questions developed for this study focus on communication practices of leadership and stakeholder participation in order to make theoretical contributions to the understanding of collaborative interorganizational relationships (IORs). Overall the results demonstrate the importance of human interaction in developing and sustaining the social infrastructure that is the essence of collaborative partnerships among multiple organizations. These data have three primary contributions: (1) detailing how leadership functions in collaborative IORs to facilitate collective action despite the lack of formal authority structures, (2) explaining the nature of stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs and the communicative tensions that result from the participation of multiple organizational stakeholders, and (3) clarifying how the representation of stakeholder interests contributes to the identity negotiation of collaborative participants. Furthermore, these data suggest a recursive relationship between leadership communication and stakeholder participation. As such, the mutual interdependence between these two concepts provides the necessary social infrastructure needed to enable collective action when organizations form collaborative relationships.

Leadership, Authority, and Collective Action

RQ1 and 1a ask about the nature of leadership and how collective action is facilitated in collaborative IORs without a formal authority structure. Results from

interview transcripts and meeting field notes indicate a form of leadership that is distributed throughout the collaborative partners mediates between common and competing interests and is sustained through specific communicative practice. Collaborative partners in the Community Action Network (CAN) come to the table needing to balance the personal interests of their home organization with the common interests of the collaboration with the intent of leveraging all interests towards some form of collective action. As one long-time collaboration member explained:

> Leadership of [collaboration] is really trying to keep – get everybody to the table, keep everybody at the table and also, it's balancing everybody's individual interests with the larger interests and focus of the main group…But you have to balance your own organization's interests with the interests of the others and make sure you're being mindful of that and holding all of that at one time (Lucinda[8]).

Yet many times these interests end up in competition because of the inherent differences that exist between collaborative partners and the between goals of the collaboration and the goals of member organizations. For example, various service providers may have different preferences for addressing the issue the CAN intends to solve (i.e., prevention vs. treating symptoms, centralized vs. decentralized care, etc.), or the plans of the collaboration threaten the operation of a member organization (i.e., pursuing a similar funding source). Despite claims to equality and the greater good of the collaboration, it is

[8] All names listed in this chapter are pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. Quotations are taken from both interview data and field note observations. Appendix C lists all the interview participants and meeting observations for this study.

difficult for CAN participants to navigate between these competing interests on their own because of their initial loyalty to a home organization. Collective action can thus be stymied because of no formal authority exists to arbitrate between competing interests. Even if there were such an authority, deciding in favor of one interest at the expense of others can be detrimental in a collaborative IOR. This is a particularly salient issue in the CAN, where many high-level executives and officials gather for planning but have no authority over each other. One CAN member described how this can happen even when voting is used as an arbitrator between competing interests:

> The reason most people don't have the patience for collaboration, is that in democracy, you can win on an important issue; you can win a 5-4 vote at council. And at the end of that vote, the 5 people won and the 4 people have lost. But you move on. And in collaboration, you cannot have 5 to 4 votes. It's not to say that collaboration always requires consensus, but it requires more of a 7-2 or a 9-0. You can't operate on 6-3 or 5-4 votes. Doesn't work because at the end of – because in democracy, the 5 who win can go charge off and do what they want done. And if the other 4 want to pick up their toys and go home on that issue, they perfectly have that right, and they can wait for that next vote. 2 years from now there's going to be another vote, and we might be the 5. But in collaboration, you can't get to the situation where 49% of the people at the table pick up their toys and go home. Collaboration requires keeping everybody at the table (Richard).

Another interviewee explained how sensitive CAN partners are to the motives of self-interested participants in relation to the goals of the overall collaboration.

> Members of a collaboration are very keyed into if somebody is coming in with a self-interest, and that are going to push their self-interest rather than the interest of the whole. They will tolerate a certain portion of that because everybody comes in – there's nobody in there that doesn't have some self-interest. But if they feel that that self-interest is taking the collaboration in a direction that they don't want to go, you'll either have rebellion or you'll have people leave the table (Laura).

Therefore an intermediary is usually needed to foster the progress of collective action in spite of competing interests, a (perceived) neutral party who can appreciate the individual interests of the various member organizations and incorporate them within broader interest(s) of the collaboration. This perceived neutrality is consistently recognized as a form of leadership in the CAN by the interview participants. One individual who is widely considered an effective leader in the CAN described it this way:

> Very seldom was I ever put in a position where I had to stand up and say: I take this side rather than this side. Very few times. Now, I avoided that as much as possible because I thought it was counterproductive to keeping all the collaborative partners moving forward. Because as soon as you take sides, obviously, you're going to lose the ones that are not. So I would always try to work for that middle ground, always try to find the common, always try to say, "Okay, work this part of this, work this part of this, but you know what – if we do this together, we're all going to succeed better." And most of the time, that was

> accepted. So they knew that I was always working for that common ground – so there would be some loss on each side, but also some gain on each side (Gary).

Yet this leadership does not necessarily reside in the same person or place, it shifts as different collaborative partners have varying stakes in the issue at hand. It can be beneficial for a collaboration to have a paid chairperson that does not represent any partner organization (i.e., grant money is used to hire a third-party facilitator). Other CAN collaborations have a rotating chairperson system among the partner organizations. Still other collaboration members can demonstrate this form of leadership without any formal position. Throughout the months of field observations I noticed several situations where collective action progressed through the initiatives of various collaborative partners, regardless of whether or not they held a formal position in the collaboration (i.e., paid facilitator or chairperson). When asked about effective leadership in the CAN, one participant described the type of person she is likely to follow:

> I think it has to be that person that they know they have their own interests of their own non-profit paramount, but then they can step back and maybe say, "I can work on this project. Even though it's only going to benefit a small amount of my clients, or our agency will just get a little bit out of it, but in the long-run, I truly understand the benefit to this big, broader perspective" (Lucinda)

She went on to describe how this type of message can be a catalyst that motivates collaborative partners to follow a particular person or organization towards a collective goal, apart from any formal position. Thus one way to understand leadership in a collaborative IOR is as a phenomenon that is distributed throughout the collaborative

partnership and enacted by various collaborative partners, depending their perceived neutrality and their stakes in the issue at hand. Authority to move the collaboration forward is developed by visibly relegating self-interest within the larger framework of the collaborative interests. Interview participants consistently indicated that they are willing to follow and commit when they see another partner engage in this form of collaboration leadership.

In order to enact this type of leadership in a collaborative IOR, data reveal several specific communication practices associated with the balancing of competing interests in order to move a collaboration towards collective action. These include casting vision, translating, and asking. Together these communication practices enable various collaboration members to establish a legitimate form of perceived authority that is necessary to make progress in collaboration.

Casting Vision

Since collaboration involves joint goals and resources beyond the capacity of any single organization, it can be difficult for individual partners to see the big picture and how their organizations fit within the larger framework of the collaboration. It can also be difficult for individual partners to see beyond the narrower focus of their home organizations and appreciate the various interests of other organizations. Therefore an important leadership practice is to "see" the multiple organizational interests in relation to the collaborative goals and communicate this vision throughout the membership. Several interview participants conveyed the importance of "seeing the possibilities" of collaboration and communicating this collaborative vision in order to build and sustain

collective action. "It requires someone who's got a vision larger than their own organization…It's got to be someone who has that vision and who can engage others in both creating that vision and moving that vision forward (Laura)," explained a long-time CAN member. Another representative described how she was able to foster progress through communicating a collaborative vision for a subcommittee she oversaw:

> It was very exciting to see that go forward. But it was an ad hoc, small group, with a specific agenda that they made happen. Now, are they visionary? Do they know what they could have the vision about? Do they know what the scope of what they could do is? No. That was something I provided for them. I said, "You know what, you can do this and then you can do this and then you can do this AND then you can do that." I told them where they could go with it (Ashley).

Similarly, an executive director of a CAN partner organization talked about how communicating a collaborative vision is important because many partners are heavily involved in the work and goals of their home organization:

> The main thing that I'd say is the ability to articulate the vision, I think is critical. Because I think otherwise you have a group of people who are very busy and don't really have a reason for being there otherwise. If you can consistently be able to say, here is why we're here. I think that kind of leadership is essential (Rebecca).

IOR collaboration involves something above and beyond the individual interests of the member organizations, so an important leadership practice is to see a collaborative vision

that transcends individual organizations and communicate this vision to the partners. Finally, another representative talked about the lack of collective action resulting from an absence of vision: "I see a lot of people waiting for direction. I see a lot of people that play the game. But I'm not sure if I see any true visionary leadership (Lisa)." Lack of vision stifles collective action because many partners are hesitant to move forward without seeing the benefits of collaboration.

Results from the interview data also indicate two subcategories of "seeing" that enable leadership to develop a vision for collective action that can be communicated to the partner organizations: anticipation and big-picture thinking. Furthermore, both of these subcategories of vision are developed through the important communicative practice of listening.

Anticipation. In the context of collaboration leadership, anticipation refers to the ability to foresee potential situations that could help or hinder collaborative relationships. This could include the ability to see possible conflicts of interest or the foresight to identify organizations outside the collaborative network who could be invited to the table. Several interview participants discussed how they looked up to people who seemed to be a step or two ahead of the rest of the collaboration because of their ability to anticipate various situations. "Leadership comes with a good deal of thought and care, preparation and being ready in anticipation," stated George, a long-time member who saw his share of effective and ineffective leadership over the years. Other people who are looked to as leaders in the collaboration talked about how important it is for them to anticipate potential conflicts because collaborations are so fragile. One former member discussed

how important it was to avoid close votes on important decisions. "You work really hard at not getting the 5-4, because you know it's not going to be collaborative at 5-4 (Richard)." He recognized his need to anticipate possible conflicts that could lead to contentious votes and do his best to avoid these situations in the first place. It can be extremely difficult to foster collaboration once a contested vote is cast and people know where everyone stands.

Interviewees also talked about the importance of leadership anticipation when making controversial recommendations and seeing future opportunities to leverage resources through collaboration. One executive director talked about needing to make potential controversial recommendations at an upcoming meeting. He was able to anticipate the possible controversy and diffuse the tensions prior to the meeting. Even if some of the tensions cannot be avoided, being able to anticipate can still help avoid alienation among collaborative partners because at least they were give an opportunity to engage on the issue. Another collaboration member explained:

> If you have an opportunity before the vote – either you as you've been appointed the leader, or you're one of several leaders – get together and talk and try and see what is the point of contention and try to see if you can resolve it. Sometimes you can't. But at least an opportunity was given to that, which is important, so no one can say: alienation took place without any steps toward a resolution (Wilson).

Finally, another executive director named Steven described how he "tried to anticipate" potential linkages with other organizations "as much as possible" in order to expand the collaborative network so his home organization could continue to sustain its ability to

deliver social services to its clients. Overall, the interview participants described anticipation as an important leadership characteristic in collaborations because it enables a way of seeing that is helps create a collaborative vision that is communicated to member organizations and helps facilitate collective action.

Big-Picture Thinking. Another way of seeing that contributes to the development of a collaborative vision involves thinking about the larger environment beyond the specific collaboration and its organizational members. Several interviewees spoke about this as an important aspect of leadership in their collaboration. One collaboration member stated: "I think that's another sign of leadership, especially in social service agencies…put aside [your] advocacy role long enough to say, 'Let's talk about the big picture, [although] that's really hard for people to do (Roberto)." Another long-time CAN member who was consistently recognized as a leader (both in interviews and informal conversations) explained that her ability to continually look at the big picture outside the collaboration was an important part of her leadership ability. Combined with anticipation, big-picture thinking enables people to see beyond the circumstance of their own organization and immediate network of collaborative partners in order to develop a broader collaborative vision. It is this vision that promotes collective action despite the lack of formal authority in IOR collaboration.

Translating

In addition to casting a collaborative vision, another communication practice associated with the balancing of competing interests in order to move a collaborative IOR towards collective action is translating. This involves taking in numerous inputs from

various collaborative partners and reinterpreting this information in new ways that are relevant for other partners or outside constituencies. One example of this happens when leaders are able to translate the broad mission and/or vision of a collaboration into specific actions or practices for member organizations. Often times collaborations are facilitated by representatives from member organizations, but the people who actually carry out the policies and decisions of the collaboration are rarely at the collaboration meetings and see a disconnect between their daily work and the lofty goals of the collaboration. "I've seen your mission. Tell me what that means in reality on a day to day basis (Lucas)," stated one CAN member. Data from interviews and meeting observations show that in a collaboration people seem willing to follow people who can translate the big-picture into tangible actions and practices that individual partners can understand.

Translation was also important when CAN members from different sectors (i.e., nonprofit, government, business) attempted to build consensus around a particular issue. Each sector has different values and perspectives about how things work, and not every idea is interpreted by each sector the same way. People in leadership positions or who are looking to develop their leadership capabilities can perform an important communicative function of translating ideas so they are relevant for multiple sectors. One CAN member described how this happened between the business community and the school district around the idea of student enrollment:

> We had a thing on the wall that said: If we don't enroll 60K students by 2015, we'll lose $8 billion in the economy. That's a big thing. That helps me take Mr.

> Hardcore business man and say: Come sit down with me and talk about this touchy-feely education stuff because if we don't figure this out, there's not going to be a workforce – nobody is going to work at your business or pay for your services (Martha).

The skill here was to translate educational values to economic values in order to foster collective action between collaborative partners. This way each partner can address the issue from a perspective that is relevant to their immediate constituents (i.e., other employees, clients, funders, customers, etc.).

Translating can also be a way that leaders mediate between various collaborative partners. One executive director of a CAN collaboration recognized that leaders of a collaboration often talk more with the members than they do with each other: "You have to help them trust each other, because you often communicate with each of them more than they communicate with each other sometimes (Sylvia)." This means an important practice of leadership in collaborative IORs is constantly translating and retranslating the various perspectives and interests of individual members in ways that are meaningful and relevant to the rest of the membership. It also means being accountable for articulating the interests of some stakeholders to others in the collaboration and clarifying an issue so people can appreciate multiple perspectives. In fact, one former collaboration chairperson explained that this was one of her primary responsibilities because not doing so gives people a reason to disengage:

> It's my responsibility to articulate that, I believe. Now how I articulate that is going to vary from person to person...But when there's not clarity around where

> we're going, it makes it easier for people to back away. That is a really easy excuse – "Well I just don't know what we're doing, so call me when you can get it figured out (Tonya)."

She understood that an important leadership practice in IOR collaboration is translating various ideas throughout the collaborative partnership in order to keep people moving towards collective action.

Asking

A final leadership communication practice that emerged from the data involved the way in which asking questions served as a catalyst for interaction and progress in collaborations. One of the challenges in collaborative IORs is maintaining momentum towards some form of progress or outcome since collaboration usually involves organizational activity that is above and beyond each member's home organizational responsibilities. Collaborative IORs can stagnate because the tendency is for people to focus on responsibilities from their home organization (what they get paid for and are accountable for) and not extend themselves too thin by committing to various collaboration responsibilities and goals. Collaboration members then give themselves credit for showing up and going through the motions, though no actual progress is achieved. Therefore an important leadership function is to initiate interaction that helps collaborative partners transcend this tendency and maintain momentum. This happens when people ask good questions that stimulate conversations and alternative ways of viewing a situation, and this practice was continually recognized as leadership and expected of people in leadership positions in the CAN.

One representative from a health care organization explained this idea when asked about communication practices of good leadership in the CAN:

> Asking questions. Not being ashamed to ask questions – which means you're showing some ignorance. But that's okay. Many times the questions you ask are questions that other folks already had and they were reluctant to ask or didn't think to ask or forgot to ask. It also helps asking questions because it gets folks thinking…who thought we've already got this locked down, and you ask a question that's relevant that has them say, "Oh I hadn't thought about that." So it expands everyone's horizons (Wilson).

He went on to describe situations where leaders asked good questions that inspired more conversation, which in turn enabled a collaborative group to move past a point of idleness.

Asking questions can also take the specific form of devil's advocacy when discussing various ideas and proposals. Of course devil's advocacy is a role that anyone can play in a group setting, but the point here is that devil's advocacy was consistently recognized as leadership because people looked to the devil's advocate for future direction, especially in CAN planning meetings. Additionally, people in leadership positions continually utilized devil's advocacy as a method of communication in collaboration meetings.

The value of asking questions was also witnessed in a number of CAN planning meetings throughout the scope of this project. One meeting in particular involved the planning of a year-end celebration to recognize various collaborative efforts throughout

the city. Initially the meeting involved limited discussion by only a few people at the table, leading to a fairly benign conclusion about how to proceed. Right before they moved on to the next agenda item someone spoke up and challenged the previous decision. This constructive criticism ignited a vibrant discussion that involved many more people than the previous interaction and led to a much more robust solution than previously developed. People at the table followed the lead of the initial devil's advocate, thus overcoming the inertia that had set in and made progress towards more substantive achievements. Even though this person did not have a formal leadership position, her communication was recognized as leadership and helped the group move forward.

Another interviewee talked about the responsibility leaders have to ask these types of questions and challenge the status quo: "[Leadership is about] raising the issues that nobody wants to look at (Isabella)." Others explained how good leadership communication is more about asking questions than telling people what to do. "Stop talking, start asking," said Nicole, a CAN member who expressed her frustrations about leadership at a CAN planning meeting. Another interviewee described the "curiosity" that is necessary to provide leadership in a collaboration, constantly inquiring and asking questions of collaborative partners about their various activities and interests. Asking questions – whether to highlight different perspectives, critically evaluate proposed solutions, or simply to show genuine interest – is an important leadership communication practice that enabled CAN to continue momentum towards collective action.

Casting vision, translating, and asking are specific leadership communication practices that foster collective action in collaborative IORs, even though there is no formal authority structure. It is also important that these communication practices are distributed throughout the collaborative partnership, not just located in a single person or small group of leaders. Certainly people in traditional leadership positions (i.e., chairperson, executive director, etc.) may be expected to engage in these practices, but many other members can do them as well. Leadership can happen through the designated role of a chairperson, but in a decentralized structure like a collaboration where people may or may not have consistent interaction with designated leaders, it is also important for leadership to be enacted by other collaboration member who help move the group towards collective action. Furthermore, these results indicate a final leadership communication practice needed to connect the ideas of casting vision, translating, and asking: listening.

Listening

When asked about effective leadership in the CAN, several interview participants immediately talked about the importance of listening. One person related this to her previous leadership experiences:

> I was the CEO of the [a national healthcare organization] for 8 years. I've been a CEO of a non-profit, executive director of another non-profit. I've been in leadership roles for awhile. And leadership, in a collaboration is some of the most difficult leadership there is…It takes great diplomacy. It takes being a very good listener (Meredith).

When asked when her collaboration's leadership was at its best, one member said, "When it listens. When it creates a space for people to talk and encourages them to talk and disagree (Nicole)." She acknowledged that she and others are most likely to follow people who listen and provide opportunities for honest input. Another CAN member described how listening was important because collaboration brings a variety of expertise to the table that needs to be balanced:

> I'm in health care. I've read a lot of books about housing. But I'm not an expert in housing. Or even if I am an expert, I still don't know every aspect of that problem, so when it comes to that meeting with the other folks that are education, housing, transportation, etc., there's got to be a period of time where I'm sitting there and I'm just listening – not focused on what I'm going to say, not focused on how I'm going to share all my great ideas and my intellect and wow everybody with how, though I'm in health care, how much I know about housing – but listening to what the other folks are saying (Wilson).

Other people gave examples of how *not* listening has a negative impact on collaboration in the CAN. An executive director talked about his continual frustration over not being able to involve the business community in their collaboration:

> We are not connecting [with] the talent and creativity in [the business] community. I think part of it is we don't necessarily want to listen to them. I think, we talk and we talk and we talk. We're not listening (Daniel).

The type of listening the interview participants described was active and engaging, placing a high value on what was being said for the sake of the collaboration.

Interviewees recognized that their leadership was more effective when they listened in this way, and they were more likely to follow people who listened like this.

Listening is the vehicle that enables people to cast a collaborative vision, translate ideas across various stakeholders, and ask the right questions. The inability to listen to collaborative partners can minimize the potential success of a collaboration because less information is shared and perspectives are limited. Without a formal authority structure, collective action is voluntary and fragile. A stakeholder who is not (authentically) listened to can easily lose motivation and disengage. Developing a collaborative vision, accurate translation, and asking good questions all come from listening to various stakeholders and people around the table in order to appreciate their ideas and correctly represent them to other people.

Overall these results show how leadership the CAN is a distributed property that mediates between common and competing interests and is sustained through specific communicative practices of casting vision, translating, asking, and listening. This form of leadership enables the CAN to maintain collective action despite the lack of formal authority structures. When this form of leadership is absent, collaboration members tend to revert to the limited self-interests of their home organizations and progress towards collaborative goals is obstructed. For example, this happened in the CAN at an Issue Area Group meeting when people started arguing about self interests because of the lack of collaborative leadership. Additionally, when this form of leadership is not distributed throughout the collaboration, collective action is stalled because members can defer to a centralized leader (whom they may have limited contact with) instead of responding to

leadership as it is performed and applied throughout the collaboration. Instead, collaboration leadership should be viewed as a phenomenon that is enacted and practiced throughout the collaboration in order to move the members towards sustained collective action.

Stakeholder Participation in Collaborative IORs

RQ2 asked about the nature of stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs. In order to answer more substantive questions about stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs, it was first necessary to explicate the concept of participation as it functions within these organizational partnerships. Results point to a form of authentic participation in the CAN that is both provided to individual members by a collaborative structure through voice and opportunity, and provided to collaborations by individual members through contribution and commitment. When this form of participation is fostered a collaboration gains input necessary to sustain and develop; when this form of participation is absent a vicious cycle emerges that can threaten a collaboration's existence or utility.

Authentic Participation

When asked about participating in the CAN, most interviewees were quick to distinguish true participation from mere physical presence or nominal involvement. They lamented that too many times they saw people show up to meetings just to fill a chair and get credit for attending. With obvious sarcasm one collaboration member described her experience in a collaboration like this: "I think it's just assumed that if you show up, you're participating. You're present – well mostly – in theory…If you're bothering to

show up then you're participating (Lacey)." Conversely, many of the interviewees expressed frustration about times when they did not have opportunities to make a significant contribution, but instead just had to sit at the table as a passive observer. As a CAN member explained, "I feel like right now, it is just being here. I would much prefer to have a more active role (Lisa)." Another CAN representative described a situation where her organization was "included" in a collaboration as an apparent ploy to look inclusive, even though one organization clearly had all the control: "It seemed very much like they had an end in mind and they went through a process so that they could say to all of us, 'We involved you' [sarcasm]" (Amanda).

All this is contrasted with an authentic form of participation that involves significant involvement and contribution from individuals and collaborations. This included both the way in which members choose to participate in the CAN and they ways that collaborative structures enabled or restricted participation of various stakeholders. Subcategories of authentic participation that collaboration members wanted from the collaboration include voice and opportunity. Subcategories that collaborations wanted from its members included valuable contributions and commitment. Results from interview transcripts and meeting observations also show that that authentic participation and the corresponding subcategories are communicative processes that are played out in the ongoing interactions between collaboration members and organizations.

Voice. When asked about participating in the CAN, interviewees consistently talked about "needing to feel like they have a say" (Sylvia) and that their "voice was heard" (Jocelyn) because they had a "chance to speak" (Katherine). One collaboration

member describe it this way: “It’s allowing each party to feel that their voice is heard. And ensuring that everyone at the table is feeling engaged and that they’re contributing” (Lisa). People acknowledged that this can be difficult and time consuming – “it slows us to a crawl (Becky)”, said one representative – but it is also essential to the nature of collaboration. People need to feel like they are being included and that they are making a contribution. CAN members were quickly disappointed when these things do not happen. One person described her continual frustration with a CAN collaboration: “I know all of us would love to feel that we’re contributing more. I know I would like to feel I’m contributing more” (Lisa).

These data suggest that voice is a communication property desired by individual collaboration members and is enabled by the collaborative structure. It plays out through the way in which meetings are facilitated, whether or not people are included in certain activities, and whether or not peoples’ ideas are represented in the various symbolic artifacts of the collaboration (i.e., meeting minutes, newsletters, websites, etc.). When collaboration members are given voice they are able to contribute the communicative inputs necessary to sustain a collaboration, including interaction, new ideas, dissent, encouragement, and information sharing. If not, collaboration participants quickly realize that they are not valued and tend to disengage – a clear detriment to any collaboration.

Opportunity. Along with voice, authentic participation in collaboration happens when people have opportunities to realize some potential benefit, whether that be personal, organizational, or otherwise. Some people discussed how they had a particular

talent or ability that they wanted to offer the community and the CAN provided that opportunity. For example, a CAN member named Lisa described what she wanted out of working with the CAN: "I think for me personally, as someone serving on the Resource Council, I want to be sure that I'm given the opportunity [to make a difference]." Others talked about how participating in a collaboration gave them an opportunity to further the mission of their home organizations. Sill others described how the CAN afforded them the opportunity to network with others who have similar interests. Whatever the case, authentic participation happened whenever a CAN collaboration provided opportunities for members to pursue various issues of importance to them. Conversely, members were very likely to disengage whenever they saw limited opportunity to benefit through participation in the CAN. Executive directors were quick to send lower-level representatives to meetings, funding partners reconsidered their need to contribute financially, and facilitators lost motivation to include other stakeholders.

In this way, collaborative IORs can be understood as inherently participatory structures where various stakeholders engage in order to realize some benefit through the opportunities provided by the collaboration. Collaboration is sustained and thrives when human interaction ensures that opportunities are communicated throughout the collaborative structure. However, when opportunities are limited or non-existent, participation diminishes (either in terms of quantitative membership or qualitative contribution), thus cutting off the very life-blood of the collaboration. Authentic participation is fostered through collaborative IORs by the voice and opportunities they provide to their members.

Contribution. In addition to the things members need from collaborations (voice and opportunity), collaborative IORs also need inputs from their members to ensure authentic participation. One of these is contribution – members who show up to meetings and speak up with information that is useful to the collaboration. One CAN chairperson described it this way:

> What I talk about with participation is that somebody is there and providing input – isn't just there… So at a conceptual level, the idea of a participant is somebody who actually participates in it, rather than just sitting back going, "Mm-hmm…okay," and being indifferent to it (Shane).

Although not every member can give substantive input on every issues, a collaborative IOR does need a steady stream of contributions in order to maintain momentum towards achieving its goals. Since collaborative IORs are communicative networks that are made of negotiations, agreements, and information sharing, members need to participate by making consistent contributions to the suppository of knowledge and relationships that constitute a particular collaboration. For example, one interviewee described a CAN collaboration that was in danger of dying out, not because of conflict or lack of interest, but simply because the group was stagnating from a lack of informational inputs. Yet the members kept talking and bringing ideas to the table even when they did not see the immediate value. Eventually this continual contribution by the members led to a breakthrough in the organizational relationships that enabled the collaboration to leverage resources in a new way and continue well into the future.

The flip side of contribution is the free rider problem that is commonplace in any form of collective action. Since collaborative IORs produce nonexcludable public goods that are accessible to all members, there is opportunity for some members to experience the benefits of collaboration without making the corresponding contribution. This is especially true in social service collaborations where there is much to gain from a public relations standpoint by being associated with certain collaborations that are well-known and effective. One CAN member described how some organizations send a representative to CAN meetings simply to be able to say that they are part of the collaboration. The representative they send is usually a lower-level employee (or intern) who has no authority to speak for the organization and rarely talks; they just fill a seat and get credit for attendance in the meeting minutes (Steven). Another interviewee described her frustration with collaboration members who do not contribute: "People get taken advantage of. One organization puts everything out there and works really hard and another partner just taking, taking, taking and never giving" (Jamie). It may be strategic or politically opportunistic for certain collaboration members to engage is this level of free riding, but eventually it has a negative influence on the collaboration as resentment builds and people recognize the unequal contributions.

One collaboration that is part of the CAN tries to address this issue through a few intentional actions. First, they require substantial involvement from the executive director or another high-level representative from partner organizations. Second, they require that every organization that claims membership in the collaboration needs to have a representative serve on a subcommittee. Anyone is welcome to attend their monthly

meeting, but membership privileges (including voting rights and affinity claims) are reserved for those who make the necessary contributions. Members say that this has been very successful: outsiders are always welcome to attend meeting (and many do) to see what the collaboration is doing, and when they get down to the nitty-gritty work they can count on various members following through with their responsibilities. Of course this does not eliminate the free rider problem from collaboration, but it does recognize the reality of strategic/political motivations and tries to move the collaboration towards a more authentic form of participation.

Commitment. Another form of authentic participation that collaborative IORs need is commitment to the collaboration and its mission, both from individual members at the table and partner organizations. When asked what it means to participate in the CAN, one chairperson said:

> It means be committed to what the collaboration is about and its mission, or don't go…Collaboration means being committed to just that. If you're not committed to what the purpose of the collaboration is, or you're only there for your own self interest, it's not collaboration (Lucas).

Collaborative IORs cannot fulfill their missions unless key stakeholders are committed to the purposes and processes of the collaboration. Otherwise collaborations lose momentum and members retreat to their limited self interests.

For many interviewees their initial understanding of commitment involved time and resources, but analysis reveals that many characteristics of commitment are also symbolic in nature and seen in communicative practices. Commitment to the

collaboration does not just happen behind the scenes through working late hours and writing checks, it also a public practice that happens through a variety of symbolic actions and interactions. It happens as key stakeholders show up at meetings and show genuine interest in the issue at hand, and are willing to associate themselves and their organization with the mission of the collaboration. People described situations where it was important to have "major players at the table" (i.e., executive directors, city officials, etc.) conveying their commitment and support to the process.

It is also important for people to demonstrate commitment to other members in a collaboration in order to create a sense of ownership and accountability. An agency representative described how public and symbolic forms of commitment may benefit a collaboration:

> I think any time you go up there and it says: XYZ subcommittee and you sign your name under it and say, "I will work on this." When the chair of XYZ says, "Joe, we need to have this done, will you help?" Joe thinks, "I signed up for this, I guess I better help" (Charles).

Without these sorts of commitments the work of a collaborative IOR rarely gets done. Collaborative partners have limited interactions, usually monthly or quarterly meetings. If commitment is not symbolically represented at these meetings then people can retreat back to their home organizations for extended periods of time with little chance of collaboration work getting accomplished. Instead they need symbolic resources (such as a public commitment) to draw upon in their day to day work in order to stay engaged in the collaboration.

Another subtle distinction has to do with CAN members communicating commitment in a meeting with other members versus privately committing to a limited number of individuals behind the scenes. Sometimes a member will sit quietly in a meeting and not demonstrate any commitment, then call the chairperson a few days later to say they are willing to work on a particular subcommittee or allocate certain resources. Although the committed time or resources are valuable to the collaboration, the true value of the commitment is when it is realized by the full body of the collaboration. If the commitment is done in private it may be months before other members are aware, thus hindering the progress of the collaboration. However, when this commitment is made publicly at a collaborative meeting a symbolic resource is created and distributed throughout the membership that provides an important input to sustain collective action. This specific phenomenon was observed through field observations as some collaborative efforts made substantial progress towards goal achievement because of commitments made in actual meetings, while other collaborative efforts stalled because of limited ownership conveyed to other members.

For example, in one CAN planning meeting a member finally volunteered to oversee a particular project that many people seemed reluctant to commit to. Yet once there was an initial commitment to oversee the project, several other members agreed to take responsibility for other components. Had this initial commitment not happened in the meeting, the project may have been delayed another month until the next meeting, or might not have received as much support if this had to be negotiated outside the meeting. Commitments in meetings become symbolic resources that collaboration members can

draw upon in their day to day work in order to stay engaged in the collaboration. Knowing that others have made public commitments can motivate collaboration members when they are back at their home organizations and away from their fellow collaborators; not seeing these types of commitments enables collaboration members to defer to the next meeting and disengage from working on collaboration responsibilities.

Overall the results show that participation in CAN collaborations is both something that collaborations give to their members through voice and opportunity, and is something that members give their collaborations through contribution and commitment. When present, the interdependent aspects of authentic participation (voice/opportunity, contribution/commitment) create an environment that provides a collaborative IOR the inputs necessary to sustain and develop collective action, while simultaneously motivating individual members to stay involved and engaged. When authentic participation is absent, a vicious cycle can emerge that is detrimental to the life of a collaborative IOR. Members who are not given voice and opportunity may not contribute and commit to the mission of the collaboration. Conversely, members who do not contribute and commit may find their voice and opportunities limited, if not diminished. Thus authentic participation is an important communication practice for members and collaborative IORs to achieve collaborative goals. Although this does represent an idealized form of participation, it does not ignore important political and strategic considerations that are part of collaboration. It may very well be the case that in the short term a member organization can gain more through free riding and inauthentic participation. However, these data suggest that collaboration members are aware of these

factors and continually try to move collaboration towards more authentic forms of participation.

Tensions of Multiple Stakeholder Participation

RQ3 asked about potential tensions that could emerge from the participation of multiple stakeholders in collaborative IORs. Scholars recognize that communicative process of participation is fraught with paradoxes (Stohl & Cheney, 2001) and organizational tensions (Tracy, 2004). The results of this research confirm this phenomenon and identify specific tensions that emerge from the participation of multiple stakeholders in collaborative IORs: tensions of inclusion and focus in the structure of collaborations, tensions of talk and action in the collaborative process, and tensions of sector discourse in collaborative interactions.

Tensions of Inclusion and Focus

The nature of collaborative IORs implies the involvement of multiple stakeholders who are included in the organizational structure of the collaboration. Collaborations arise because issues are multi-faceted and resources are scarce, especially in social service collaborations. As one interviewee explained, "[Collaboration is all about] the capacity to attract people, the capacity to keep a table that is inclusive" (Hector). When discussing a particularly successful collaboration, many interviewees said the "inclusiveness of the collaboration" was the heart of its success. One executive director stated:

> I do think that collaboration is a good thing and certainly my training as a policy analyst is always to bring – to get as many viewpoints and you can

> and bring together the stakeholders and you can't be successful without that. If you push through an initiative [without inclusiveness] it's not going to work (Martha).

Inclusion is a core aspect of a collaborative ethos and an idea that resonates across the participants.

At the same time, the reality and constraints of organizational life demand a level of focus in order to accomplish goals and achieve collaborative missions. Without focus the concern is that a collaboration will be spread too thin and will not get anything done. In a collaborative IOR there are too many people and interests to attend to everything, so the collaboration needs to focus on a few key objectives that everyone can work towards. "I think there are so many issues that if we're not focused, we won't address any of the issues very effectively" (Katherine), explained one CAN member. Another said, "I think having an incredibly laser like focus…is really important for a collaboration to be able to pull everyone together and feel like progress is being made" (Meredith). In fact, the lack of focus was a major source of conflict for many collaboration members. With clear aggravation in her tone, one collaborative partner explained, "My personal opinion is that we're on too many fronts right now… I think it's focus. I think focus is the biggest frustration" (Isabella). People involved in collaborative IORs recognize the need to focus in order to make progress and achieve objectives. Others think that collaboration itself can be a vehicle for focus. A representative from a private funding agency connected to the CAN explained that they believe requiring (or rewarding) organizations to collaborate in order to receive funding is a good way to develop focus on important issues:

"[Collaboration is] a necessary part of our methodology in the non-profit space to get people together to focus on issues" (Jonathan). Focus becomes an important aspect of collaboration in order to achieve specified goals.

Yet many times focus is at odds with inclusion. To focus is to necessarily exclude, and inclusion implies a broad (non-focused) perspective. Interview participants recognized this tension: "There's a ton of non-profits here. It is conceivable that the CAN could be a driving force for consolidation and efficiency. But when you do that, you're going to upset a lot of [people]" (Michael). Another coordinator talked about needing to find balance in the tension between inclusion and focus:

> There are opportunities to be much more strategic and focused around the work that's done. The balance with that is that at the same time, you've got to maintain a few of the big picture… I think – and this is always the challenge – we always get ourselves in trouble a little bit when we say we're going to focus on [some issues] rather than others… That's where the CAN has to have that balance between staying focused on everything, but doing some things (Laura).

CAN members clearly struggled with this tension. One director acknowledged the need to include more ideas, just as long as that does not get in the way of the "real" work: "It's probably a good thing to have cross-issue dialogues, as long as you don't interfere with the boots on the ground and what they're trying to accomplish" (Charles). Another CAN chairperson struggled to resolve this tension by omitting the word "priorities" and instead "focusing" on a "holistic" approach that would be perceived as

"more inclusive" (Daniel). But this appears to be nothing more than a verbal slight-of-hand: you simply cannot "focus" on everything. Trying to align multiple organizations towards a more limited focus goes against the very circumstances that initiate the collaboration in the first place, namely that all these organizations have very different purposes, mandates, constituencies, and responsibilities. Yet another interviewee described a good collaboration as "keeping everything focused and moving in the direction of accomplishing the item of the subject, but without showing a bias for a particular point of view" (George). This too reveals an attempt to resolve the tension by simply trying to combine the conflicting elements of inclusion and focus into a singular criterion for effective collaboration. However, this strategy does not do away with the original issue since focusing always involves a degree of bias toward the issues that are selected for focus.

This tension between inclusion and focus cuts right to the core of collaborative IORs because it pits the conceptual essence of a collaboration against practical necessity, forcing participants to choose between limiting the necessary inputs for collaboration versus actually realizing the intended outcome of the collaboration. The resulting paradox is that focus attracts participants, yet more participation limits focus. People are attracted to collaborative efforts that are making progress and accomplishing goals, yet they are also pushed away when the collaboration moves in a direction that does not include their organizational and/or personal interests. As people interact and communicate their organizational interests the collaboration senses a need to focus, and in turn the language of focus symbolizes who is and is not included, regardless of if these

messages are explicitly stately or subtly implied. The communication challenge for collaborative participants seems to be negotiating a collaborative space that is simultaneously inclusive and exclusive, conveying a focus that is broad enough to allow multiple entry points, yet narrow enough to make progress.

Tensions of Talk and Action

A second tension emerging from the participation of multiple stakeholders in the CAN was between the need to process and plan in collaboration meetings versus showing some tangible product or outcome. This was the biggest source of contention across all the interview participants and meeting observations: "Meeting and talking and meeting and talking [sic] and never getting anywhere. That, to me, is the downfall of collaboration. I cannot stand going to meetings and talking and feeling like we're not getting anywhere" (Allison). Collaboration requires a substantial amount of coordination and discussion, but usually they also convene for the express purpose of achieving some form of measurable goal or result. A collaboration member described how this tension showed up in the CAN:

> I think there are two main groups within the CAN: (1) the thinkers and the planners, and (2) you have the service providers, the social workers and other groups, all those other service providers. Those are action oriented people. We have been tremendously criticized because there's not much action for the taste of lots of people. It seems that we spend so much time on processing, dialogue, reflection that there's no steps to move forward (Hector).

This gets at the difference between seeing collaboration as a means to an end verses seeing collaboration as an end in and of itself. For example, one participant explained, "I think collaborations easily become about process, process, process and they forget entirely why they are there and you spend a tremendous amount of time on process and little gets done" (Jackie). On the other hand, another participant placed the emphasis in collaboration on the process: "A perfect product is a failure without a perfect process" (Becky).

The tension arises between participants who just want to "get something done" and others who feel collaboration will not yield good outcomes without a certain amount of discussion and planning. This is played out in countless interactions between participants as they negotiate an agreeable balance of talk and action. Consider how a CAN member from the business community described the continual frustration:

> There are so many health and human service types that love process. They love process and they want to do process all day. We actually have a very hard time getting members of the business community to [participate in the collaboration] because they lose their minds. It's like, "When are they going to do something? What is the purpose of all this meeting and meeting and discussing?" So there is a fair amount of frustration from the business community (Jennifer).

Some CAN participants would like to solve this tension by having the process people talk less and take more action, but others took a more nuanced position and recognized the potential benefit of such tension in a collaboration. They saw the continual tension

between talk and action as a productive force that kept everyone in check and allowed the collaboration to progress at a healthy pace:

> So you need that tension between process and action so that you get to the truth of the matter. You get to the truth of what the community really needs. If the action people just got to run out and do a thing, then the process people need the pressure from the action people, because I can be a process person myself, and we'll process to death. So it's those opposing forces that keep us on track. It's like walking the tightrope. Without that balance, you'll fall off on one side or the other (Tonya).

Sometimes collaboration meetings achieve this balance. At the end of one particular CAN meeting the participants made some very tangible decisions that resulted in clear action items. The facilitator concluded the meeting by saying, "Good work everyone. We needed to do the blah, blah process stuff to get to this point, but now I think we've got some real action here (Tonya)." This comment recognized both the importance of action as an end goal, and the necessity of talk to get to the action.

The participation of multiple stakeholders in collaborative IORs gives rise to a communicative tension between talk and action. Participants disagree on the right time to transition from planning to product, what actually counts as action, and how much discussion is adequate (verses possible) for a given plan to be implemented. Despite many participants' inclinations towards action, numerous field observations demonstrated that a major source of contention in collaboration meetings was when someone actually

tried to move the conversation towards action. For example, this happened in the CAN when the Resource Council was discussing plans to change the bylaws to promote more efficient decision making. Whenever someone suggested a resolution to the issue so the group could move forward, someone else spoke up and raised a concern. It seems that everyone wants action in principle, but in practice it needs to be action that they approve and coincides with their interests. Otherwise more talk and planning is necessary. The problem is that there are real differences between collaborative partners and the way in which they would act on particular issues. It is never as simple as just "stop talking" and "take action." A major communication challenge for collaborative IORs is to manage the tension between talk and action, to negotiate a productive balance that fosters interaction and results in collective action.

Tensions of Sector Discourses

A final communicative tension emerging from the participation of multiple stakeholders in the CAN had to do with the way in which participants deviated from collaborative discourse during times of conflict and confusion. Lewis (2006) uses the terms "collabracation" and "collabracating" to describe a form of communication that is present when people interact in collaborative ways (i.e., talk in ways that promote cooperative activity, leveraging/sharing resources, equality, etc.). This form of communication is most likely to foster productive collaborative relationships that lead to beneficial collection action.

In contrast to this collaborative discourse, results from interviews and meeting observations indicate that participants have a tendency to display *sector discourses* at

times of disagreement and uncertainty. By *sector discourse* I refer to a form of communication that privileges the values and norms of a particular segment of organizational activity represented in the collaboration, rather than the collaboration itself. Tensions of sector discourses emerged when collaboration members relied on the different values and norms of their specific sector instead of transcending these differences through collaborative discourse. This form of communication can be detrimental to a collaboration that requires participants to overcome their sector differences and develop solutions beyond their individual capacities. Tensions of sector discourses became apparent in the data as conflicts in the collaboration continually seemed to represent sector interests. As one member explained, "One of the big challenges for the CAN is speaking with different audiences. The business community 'hears' things differently than the nonprofit community…so do politicians and other government agencies" (Daniel).

In the Community Action Network there are three primary sectors represented: (1) the nonprofit sector, (2) the governmental or public sector, and (3) the business sector. The vast majority of participants in the Community Action Network work for home organizations in one of these three sectors. Each sector operates within a framework that highlights certain values and norms above others. The nonprofit sector tends to focus on service delivery, social entrepreneurship, civic/political engagement, and religious faith (Frumkin, 2002). The governmental sector is most concerned with political constituencies, the provision of public goods (i.e., education, EMS, etc.), and taxpayer accountability. The business sector is primarily about profitability, competition, and

efficiency (Bush, 1992). When not in collaboration with each other, organizations and their members gravitate towards the values and norms of their particular sectors in order to accomplish their day-to-day operations. When collaborating however, organizations seek to rise above these limited sector discourses to achieve a collaborative discourse that best facilitates collective action. One collaboration member described the challenge and importance of overcoming sector discourses:

> That's not easy because they all have their own agenda. The district has their agenda, the City has their agenda. They all have their unique problems. To get them to all say, "Okay, we're gonna try to do this." But they all have different mandates. You can't blame the City for saying, "We're going to focus on this." The school district – their mandate is very different. So, I think what the CAN has to do is bring the broader community in and say, "Okay, community. This is what we need and this is what we're going to focus on (Kelly)."

This comment illustrates the need to shift from sector discourses to a collaborative discourse, an important transition for collaborations to recognize and achieve.

These sector discourses are not inherently incompatible, but they can come into competition during times of conflict and uncertainty. The problem is that collaborative discourse is not natural for most participants, so when confronted with challenges in the collaboration they resort back to the values and norms of their particular sector in order to make sense of present circumstances. For example, this happened in a CAN meeting where participants were discussing the need for new housing developments throughout

the county. Many different ideas were being discussed and it was clear that some people were getting upset with the lack of progress in the conversation. In a moment of frustration one member at the table from the business sector said, "We're getting bogged down in the process. If you want to improve housing, then go improve housing. Don't tell me about it, go do it" (Martha). This comment showed a lack of concern for the interests of the other sectors (nonprofit and governmental), namely valuing the process of discussing all viable possibilities and ensuring that all constituencies are represented. Instead, this comment clearly privileged efficiency and action and upset the other members at the table. Obviously no one can just "go do housing," but at a time of aggravation this member got away from the collaborative discourse needed to foster collective action and instead resorted back to a sector discourse (business) that marginalized the values of the other sectors and their participants. Needless to say, the conversation did not accomplish anything and the housing agenda item was tabled for another meeting.

Another collaboration member told a story about a former industry employee who became the new program director for his nonprofit agency. He demonstrated the tensions between sectors in the way he communicated with government auditors who were part of their IOR collaboration:

> When the government auditors - he thought government regulations were pretty stupid - when a set of government auditors (from the Department of Labor) were down here towards the end of our first year of operation, he gave them a book entitled *The Death of Common Sense,* which is a 200-page criticism of federal

> regulations and others strangling the economy. He said, “Here’s some interesting reading for you. This was not paid for by government money.” That did not enhance our relationship with the Department of Labor (Charles).

He continued with another explanation of how people from different sectors tend to react based on the norms of their respective sectors:

> Some of the best things and some of the worst things that were inherent in [our CAN collaboration] were because so many of us came from industry and we were used to running things the way you run industry, working with people who you pay for. If they don’t want to do something, you listen to their objections and say “I heard your objections. I want you to do it anyway, so go do it if you want to continue working here.” That doesn’t work with non-profit, particularly when you’re dealing with volunteers. They’ll say, “That’s how you want to be. Forget it. I’m out of here” (Charles).

In this situation the people from the business community had one set of expectations for how to communicate with people when there were objections about the work; the people from the nonprofit sector had a different set of expectations. Neither was beneficial for collaboration. In collaboration business representatives cannot boss people around and expect them to follow orders. Conversely, nonprofit representatives cannot always have things their way just because they are volunteering their time altruistically. Both need to develop a collaborative discourse that overcomes the limitations of their respective sector discourse in order to achieve collective action through collaboration.

Sector discourses had negative effects on other CAN meetings as well, leading to either inaction or unnecessary disputes. Sometimes representatives from government agencies would stifle progress by deferring to bureaucratic regulations instead of taking action or trying to move forward in the decision making process. Other times nonprofit representatives would focus on anecdotal evidence and client stories in order to arouse emotional sentiment instead of addressing the issue at hand. Additionally, numerous "what if" scenarios about hypothetical clients were discussed at length, even to the point of killing an agenda item and not reaching a decision. Rather than displaying a collaborative discourse that helped move a group towards collective action, these situations show participants resorting to sector discourses that moved the group away from collaboration and kept them stuck in competing self interests.

This issue is not necessarily that these sector discourses are "wrong;" in fact they are "correct" based on the values and norms of their respective sectors. The problem is that collaboration is more that just the sum of each organization in various sectors. Collaboration between organizations happens when participants transcend their individual organizations and sectors in order to develop joint solutions through cooperation. If each stakeholder simply displayed their sector discourse, collaboration would not happen (or at least not very effectively). Collaboration does not emerge simply from competing self-interests; it happens when participants communicate in ways that promote cooperative activity, leveraging/sharing of resources, equality, and joint decision making. This type of collaborative discourse is needed in order to facilitate collective action beyond the limited visions of each member organization.

Of course, it can be very challenging to supersede the comfortable sector discourses that frame participants' experiences back at their home organizations. One city official illustrated how frustrating it can be to develop a collaborative discourse between various sectors. At one point in a meeting she said:

> We all know what works…we've been doing it for 30 years. I'm tired of people in the business community saying, "Show me something that works and I'll fund it." That's a load of crap. We have to find a way to frame it for them so they see it the way we do (Andrew).

This comment reveals how tempting it is to rely on the values and norms of one's sector, and the challenge of reaching out to other sectors in order to display a collaborative discourse that leads to collective action.

On the other hand, consider the following example of collaborative discourse at a CAN planning meeting. A representative from a transportation organization gave a presentation to the other members at the meeting. The purpose of the presentation was to give an overview of the organization and discuss their needs. Rather than making autocratic demands, this representative consistently talked about how "we can work together" and "help each other achieve our goals." He tried his best to communicate the needs of his origination in the context of the other agencies at the table. When he highlighted recent successes of his organization he mentioned how these successes would be beneficial to other collaborative partners and gave credit to other agencies involved. After some brief Q&A, he ended his presentation by saying, "thank you partner." In contrast to dozens of other presentations I saw at the CAN meetings, I recorded in my

field notes that this representative seemed to be going out of his way to be transparent, helpful, and part of the solution. This moved the meeting closer towards a collaborative discourse that could foster more productive discussions and cooperation.

The tensions of sector discourses are communicative in nature because they constitute a particular organizational reality that is conveyed to others through human interaction. The challenge is not to resolve these tensions; the various sector discourses are real and relevant to organizations operating in those sectors. Instead, the focus is on how collaboration members co-create a collaborative discourse that synthesizes the qualities of each sector in order to transcend the limitations of a sector operating in isolation. This collaborative discourse is constantly negotiated as different aspects of each sector are more or less relevant at given points in the planning process, with the goal of sustaining a form of interaction between participants that consistently facilitates collective action towards goal achievement in the collaboration.

Representation of Stakeholder Interests in Collaborative IORs

Earlier in this chapter I discussed the tensions of competing interests in collaborative IORs, between the interests of single organizations and the overall interests of the collaboration, and how collaboration leadership involves mediating between these competing interests in order to move collaborative partners towards collective action. Since collaborative IORs are a collection of interests among the various partners, other important issues involve *whose* interests are represented in the collaboration and *how* these interests are represented through human interaction, and the implications this representation process has on the development of the collaboration. This is because

organizational and collaboration interests are realized within the interaction processes of collaboration; people make their interests known through various meetings, personal conversations, and electronic correspondence. How these interests are represented in these interactions influences the way partners perceive the collaboration and make decisions towards (or away from) collective action.

Balancing Interests to Achieve Collaboration

The first part of RQ4 asked whose interests stakeholders represent in collaborative IORs. Results indicate that the majority of CAN members come to the table to represent the interests of their home organizations or agencies, and this is also how they see others in the collaboration. When asked how they view their fellow collaborators, most participants echoed the sentiments expressed by the member of a planning committee: "I see them as their home organization, because that's where their money…they're being paid by their home organization. Ultimately, at the end of the day that's how you're going to decide your alliance" (Margaret). These perceptions are consistently reinforced at collaboration meetings where people have individual name plates that list the organization they represent. The CAN also begins every meeting with introductions around the table, and everyone always indicates their home organization or agency. The initial observation is that everyone is coming to the table to represent some outside constituency.

Conversely, the same people recognize that collaboration has to be more than just competition or negotiation between individual interests; stakeholders must pursue their self interests within the broader framework of collaboration interests in order for either to

be realized. This relates to the classic prisoner's dilemma: there is more to gain through cooperation, but also more to risk since others may "defect" in order to avoid the free-rider problems so commonly associated with collective action (Axelrod, 1984). The challenge is to define the collaboration goals in such a way that individual stakeholders can help accomplish these goals while simultaneously pursing the interests of their home organizations (or at least justify their involvement in the collaboration in relation to agency interests). A CAN associate director described it this way:

> When organizations come together to collaborate, they have decided that one piece of their mission or purpose is in alignment with the goals of the collaboration. And therefore, it's beneficial to them to forge a piece of their mission together with others who, to pool resources, whether those are intellectual or they're actual dollar figures, to accomplish more what they could together, than they could do alone - to leverage those types of resources, whatever they might be (Meredith).

This requires a continual balance between individual and collaborative interests. "You have to balance your own organization's interests with the interests of the others and make sure you're being mindful of that and holding all of that at one time (Allison)."

Yet people are continually pulled toward the interests of their individual home organizations. They value the mission of the collaboration, but at the end of the day their loyalties are to their employer and the overwhelming amount of work they have to do in their regular jobs. One city employee who works with child services admitted that he wants to help the collaboration succeed, but "what keeps me at the table is if I see the

issue they're talking about, the plan they're talking about, will have a relatively direct impact on children and families" (Roberto). If not, he is less likely to be engaged in the collaboration. Additionally, the director of another nonprofit connected to the CAN explained her motivations for collaborating: "I'm looking for things that will help further our mission. I would be much more proactive on that" (Nick).

But this is where collaborative partners need to be careful. Most people understand that their fellow collaborators come to the table with some level of self-interest. However, if they rarely demonstrate a willingness to go beyond self-interest to serve the collaboration then they actually hurt their ability to even benefit their self-interests. One CAN member expressed this frustration:

> What I usually see, is when they should be representing [their collaboration], they'll represent their agency. They'll speak for [the collaboration], but they're really only speaking out of the experience of their organization and not thinking about the network of people (Jamie).

In another example, one chairperson described a situation where a nonprofit representative only ever expressed concern for his particular issue. He supported the collaboration with consistent attendance and involvement, but every time he spoke or contributed it was always in the context of furthering the interests of his home organization. In time a problem developed where this individual needed substantial help from the other collaborative partners in order for his organization to avoid a crisis. However, the other collaborative partners offered only marginal assistance and his organization was not able to avoid the crisis. Most people said they simply were not very

motivated to help because this person never seemed to go beyond self interest. In the end, his continual focus on his own organization's interests prevented the very assistance his organization needed to survive.

This is the paradox of representing stakeholder interests in collaborative IORs: most people are drawn to the table in order to advance the mission and interests of their home organization, but if they focus too much on this goal they will threaten the very interests they intended to support. The key is to balance self-interests with collaboration interests, a continual negotiation among collaborative partners and home organizations that ensures the advancement of both organizational and collaborative interests. We have already seen what can happen when collaboration members focus too much on organizational/individual goals, but it can also become problematic if representatives become too immersed in the collaboration and loose sight of the organizational goals they are sent to represent. Either way, collaboration becomes unbalanced to the extent that members gravitate too far towards their own organizational/personal goals or the collective goals of the collaboration. The communication challenge is to find ways to talk about self/organizational interests in ways that support the mission of the collaboration, and conversely to discuss the goals of the collaboration in ways that support the multiple goals represented by member organizations in the collaboration. This simultaneous balancing of interests becomes even more complicated to the extent that individual, organizational, and collective goals less compatible.

The answer to the first part of RQ4 is that people do their best to represent the interests of the collaboration, yet they always do this within the context of representing

the interests of their home organizations or agencies. Few collaborative partners have the luxury of being fully-committed to the collaboration. These may include paid staff positions in the collaboration, retirees who volunteer full time, or government officials who serve the collaboration as part of their job description. But these people are the exception, not the norm (only nine of the interview participants fall in this category). Most CAN partners participate in collaborations above and beyond the requirements of their normal job, and therefore must continually balance the interests of their home organization with the interests of the collaboration. Many times the interests of the collaboration help further the interests of their home organizations, but other times they do not. The key is to continually find a way to support to collaboration's interests even when they do not directly support home organization interests. Otherwise the lack of support for collaboration interests will eventually hurt the home organization at times when the interests do align. Of course this is not easy to do. As one nonprofit employee explained:

> I think it's hard when we try to have conversations that are about: Well, what about this goal? Let's talk about this goal. That's where people come from in relation to it. "Well, that's not an area of focus for us," someone might say. People really do come from a perspective of their agency. I guess even in collaborations with a bunch of non-profits working together - that's their job, is to represent their agency. I feel like the best collaborations where the best things can happen when people get out of that for some issue, but I think that's really, really difficult to do (Julie).

However, being involved in a collaboration means embracing this challenge and continually negotiating these interests in order to achieve both individual and collaboration goals.

Practices of Stakeholder Interest Representation

Given this understanding of whose interests are represented in collaborative partnerships, it is also important to examine how this representation actually takes place. Collaborations involve countless meetings, conversations, and exchanges of information. These are where interests are presented, advocated, and supported. The second part of RQ4 asked how stakeholder interests are represented in various collaborative activities. Initial observations reveal that CAN meeting minutes, liaisons, and invited presentations are the primary way that stakeholder interests are represented in the CAN. However results further indicate that the representation of interests throughout the collaboration is problematic. Issues of accuracy and consistency are troublesome because of the complexity of collaborative partnerships and the overwhelming amount of information being exchanged. Furthermore, there is concern about how the interests of service recipients are represented, and whether or not this has a negative effect on the collaboration.

Since a large amount of information is exchanged throughout a collaborative partnership, an initial concern is the accuracy of this information, especially when it involves the interests and motivations of various collaborative members. Several interview participants expressed concern that their ideas where not accurately represented. "I get frustrated when I express [my organization's] position on something

because it usually gets restated incorrectly by the leadership" (Martha), explained one collaboration member, referring to people who facilitate meetings and people who chair various CAN collaborations. Another member said one of the biggest challenges in the CAN is that ideas are accurately represented across the various committees and councils (Rachel). It is impossible for all the collaborative partners to attend all the meetings, so it is important that their interests are accurately represented in various meetings and documents. The following section examines how interests are represented in the CAN and the challenges associated with these representations.

Meeting Minutes. One way the CAN tries to represent stakeholder interests is through detailed meeting minutes that are posted online. Of course these minutes are fairly dry and straightforward, and rarely do they capture the emotion or sentiment of a particular discussion. Their purpose is mainly to document various agenda items and decisions, not the qualitative aspect of a meeting. In comparing my field notes of CAN meetings with the minutes from those same meetings, I noticed large discrepancies between the mood and quality of the meeting recorded in my field notes versus the detached, objective information contained in the meeting minutes. For example, in one particular CAN meeting a member made a fairly provocative comment about the future direction of the CAN after the long-time executive director had retired. This led to a substantial amount of supportive and critical interaction. However, the meeting minutes simply recorded that there was a "discussion about the future direction of the CAN." A potentially significant interaction was lost in the official record of the meeting, and the interests of the stakeholders involved were not accurately represented to the rest of the

collaboration. However, the practical reality is that it is simply too time consuming and involves too many resources to fully capture the richness of all the relevant information from a particular meeting. Nonetheless, the accuracy of stakeholder interests diminishes as they are represented throughout the collaborative partnership in meeting minutes.

Meetings involve much more than the mere exchange of information, yet this is mainly what meeting minutes are able to capture. Meeting minutes are a tool to record basic information about agenda items and decisions, but they cannot trace the nuances of interactions and emotions that accompany information exchange in meetings. And even if they could, it is unlikely that most collaboration members would take the time to pour through the minutia of details that would be required to fully capture the experience of a meeting. The challenge for collaborations is to represent this knowledge apart from experience.

Liaisons. Another way that the CAN tries to improve the accuracy of information represented in the collaboration is by having at least one full-time staff member at every CAN meeting. Theses staff members then coordinate with each other to keep an accurate record of information in the collaboration. As they attend various meeting they relay information from other meetings to the attendees and act as liaisons between various partners. However, this role can become problematic as people become concerned that their discussions in one meeting will be presented by a liaison to members in a different meeting.

At one particular meeting, a member voiced an initial concern that that the conversations in some of the collaborative meetings need to show up in the other CAN

planning bodies. A CAN staff member explained how they were working to develop a process so that these ideas and interests could be represented across the CAN, probably utilizing a liaison role. But some people objected to this idea. "Those people want their own meeting where they are free to discuss openly. A CAN liaison will ruin that," expressed one member. "They say things in those meeting that they wouldn't say if certain people were present…but they need to be able to discuss those things" (Susan), she continued. Then a different member responded, "How are we going to access information and learn from each other if we don't have a liaison or representative at all these meetings" (Hector)? The issue was not resolved in this meeting, and it illustrates a complicated aspect of collaboration. The challenge is that stakeholders want their interests accurately represented in a collaboration. Yet they do not always trust other people to do this, and they also do not have the time or resources to represent their ideas to everyone themselves. Therefore their choice is to either risk inaccurate representation or no representation at all.

In another example CAN members at an Administrative Team meeting began discussing necessary changes to the CAN's daily operating procedures for making decisions and getting approvals from partner organizations. There were strong objections to the proposal and vigorous discussion about the issues. Eventually the proposal was approved. However, when a liaison from that meeting presented this decision to the Resource Council there was absolutely no mention of the objections and discussion. It was simply reported that particular planning body approved the proposal and it could

move forward. The overall conclusion of the previous meeting was represented, but important stakeholder interests were lost in the representation process.

These data suggest that a liaison can both help and hinder the representation of stakeholder interests in a collaborative IOR. As a collaborative partner it can be useful to have your ideas represented by people who were actually at the meeting where you expressed your interests. However, the presence of that same liaison may prevent you from expressing interests in a particular meeting because you know that information will be passed on to others. It appears that the important issue is the nature of the relationship between the liaison and the collaborative partner. Since collaborative partners cannot consistently represent their interests to all the relevant parties involved, it is critical that they establish and maintain productive relationships with anyone acting in a liaison role that represents partner interests to other members.

Invited Presentations. A third way that stakeholder interests are represented in the CAN involves formal presentations by various members or relevant constituents of the collaboration. Most CAN meetings involved some form of presentation by partner representatives. These might entail an overview of a new agency or program, upcoming needs or concerns, or updates on past projects. Whatever the case, these are opportunities for stakeholders to speak for themselves and represent their interests to the rest of the collaboration.

Yet these situations also proved to be problematic for the representation of stakeholder interests for two reasons: (1) presenters were reluctant to advocate for specific interests, and/or (2) the collaboration did not have a process for following

through with requests. The first problem involves a heightened emphasis on information sharing and a reluctance to reveal individual interests. In my field observations I witnessed dozens of presentations by partner representatives about their agencies and projects. I counted no more than three presentations where the presenter actually made a specific request or advocated for a particular idea. Even when this happened there was limited response or discussion. The vast majority of the presentations simply involved broad overviews of partner organizations and the nature of their work. They read from text-heavy PowerPoint slides that were photo copied and distributed to everyone at the table. Rarely did these presentations seem to have any central idea or objective.

Given the tensions of individual versus collaborative interests discussed above, presenters may be cautious not to come across as too self-interested. Although the concerns of seeming to focused on organizational interests are certainly warranted, it is also problematic when any degree of self-interest is absent. Collaboration members do need to have a basic understanding of why other people are at the table and what generally motivates their participation. Yet I was surprised to see how many people had no idea what their fellow collaborators did or why they were involved in the collaboration. Several interview participants said they had very little knowledge of the interests of others at the table, and they assumed most people were just as uncertain about their involvement as well.

As mentioned above, the issue is not showing any self-interest, but rather balancing this self-interest with an appropriate level of interest in collaborative goals and the interests of other member organizations. Of course this cannot happen if stakeholders

do not communicate their individual interests, especially when given formal opportunities and such messages are expected. Collaborative partners must have some knowledge about the interests of other stakeholders in the collaboration or else they are not able to make connections between multiple interests in order to move the collaboration towards further collective action.

In one situation, several meeting participants were very critical of a particular agency that provides transportation services throughout the county. After the meeting I spoke with a representative from the agency. She said, "Oh, they just don't understand all the restrictions on us regarding our service delivery. We'd love to provide the services they want, but we don't have the authority (Isabella)." I asked if she or anyone from her agency had ever tried to communicate these restrictions to the other collaborative partners so they would understand his limitations. "Not really," she stated. She said she just assumed other people would eventually find out for themselves. This lack of information sharing fostered a substantial amount of unnecessary negative perceptions. Using opportunities in collaboration meetings to share information about restrictions and agency interests could help develop collaborative solutions, instead of eliciting negative reactions. It is important that individual stakeholder interests are consistently represented to other stakeholders in order sustain the productive tension between individual and collaborative goals.

The second problematic aspect with the invited presentation in the CAN is the lack of a process to follow through with the requests of collaborative partners. Even when stakeholders did share specific interests and requests, it was clear that little would

be done in response to those requests. One specific form of invited presentation that illustrates this is the "citizen's communication" that happens at the beginning of some of the more prominent CAN meetings. This is a brief opportunity for anyone in the community to come and address the CAN and make them aware of their issues. Although this is an important time of information sharing and rapport building, little is done to follow up on the requests or petitions by the people making citizen's communication presentation. In fact, most presentations did not even elicit questions or discussion. The person makes their brief presentation and the CAN meeting moves on to the next agenda item.

While it is valuable that community stakeholders are given opportunities to voice their ideas, eventually they desire some form of action or resolution to their requests. Stakeholders pursue interests with the ultimate desire to fulfill or realize those interests in some way. If there are not legitimate opportunities for this to happen, stakeholders will eventually pursue their interests elsewhere. Over time this would be detrimental to collaborations, which rely on stakeholders who continually come back to the table and provide the necessary inputs to sustain the collaboration because they see an opportunity to advance the interests of their home organizations.

Another situation involved an invited presentation by an agency that focuses on serving elderly citizens throughout the city. At this point there was growing recognition in the CAN that their current processes of information sharing and interest representation at meetings were not leading towards the collective action that was needed to sustain the interests of the collaborative partners. After the presentation the chair of the meeting

thanked the presenters for their hard work, but acknowledged, “This is an example of our old model and why it isn’t working any more. There’s lots of great work here, but I’m afraid minimal action will result” (Daniel).” Several people nodded in agreement, although there was no further discussion. Not only are collaborations hurt when individual stakeholders do not have legitimate opportunities to advance their interests, but collaborations also suffer when the representation of stakeholder interests does not lead to the collective action need to achieve collaborative goals.

The dual-interest nature of collaboration (individual and collective goals) means that all levels of interest are consistently pursued and realized throughout the evolution of a collaboration. In the first example (citizen’s communication) individual interests were not given a legitimate opportunity to be actualized. In the second example (elderly agency) the collaboration was not structured to translate the inputs into collective action towards the achievement of collaborative goals. Both could be detrimental to collaboration, which relies on the continual pursuit of individual and collaborative interests in order to survive and progress.

Conversely, my field observations suggest that stakeholder interests were more fully represented in informal interactions than they were in formal presentations at meetings. In the informal conversations I overheard with collaboration members and the interactions I had with various people I found that the information being exchanged was much richer than the dry, straightforward, and de-contextualized information formally presented at meetings and recorded in the minutes. This suggests that stakeholders in collaborative IORs can more fully represent their interests throughout the collaborative

partnership if they are more involved in a variety of informal interactions and social networks. It seems as if formal opportunities can only accomplish so much; an important qualitative component to stakeholder interest representation happens as collaboration members interact with each other and communicate their stakes informally. Attentiveness to this dynamic helped collaboration members overcome some of the problematic issues associated with representing their interests through standard collaboration channels.

Stakeholder Identity Construction & Negotiation

A final theme that emerged from this section of data involved how identities are created and maintained through the process of stakeholder interest representation. The data show that CAN members wear a variety of "hats" based on the multiple interests they represent, and these hats constitute their identity in collaboration. An executive director of a partner organization summarized this idea:

> The thing about a collaboration is your members are wearing lots of different hats. The staff is wearing one hat, as the staff for the collaboration. But the members are wearing multiple hats and they have multiple relationships with their fellow members (Sylvia).

This comment demonstrates the complexity of collaborative IORs that are comprised of members with multiple identities based on the interests they represent and the goals they hope to accomplish. Collaboration is a place for identity construction and negotiation (Lewis, 2006). Thus an important skill in collaboration is navigating these various identities in order to understand how they influence decision making and the development of the collaboration.

Previous results of this study discussed above show that most people view other collaboration members as representing their home organization or agency – that is the hat they wear. However, my analysis above also shows the negative effects of only representing the self-interests of a home organization. This narrow identity is harmful to both the overall collaboration, which relies on balancing individual and collective interests, and is harmful to the individual member, whose interests can be marginalized if that is all they ever represent. The challenge is to convey an identity that appropriately advocates for self-interests and is perceived by others as representing the best interests of the collaboration.

Results from interview transcripts and meeting observations show that collaboration members can develop a robust identity in collaboration through two primary means: (1) awareness of self and others, and (2) qualification. These are also ways that collaboration members continually negotiate their identities. Furthermore, the data demonstrate that interpersonal interaction and self-disclosure are also important aspects of identity maintenance in collaboration. These results also suggest that collaborations work better when the people at the table have more-developed identities and see more depth in the identities of others. This enables a collaborative IOR to transcend the mere collection of individual/competing interests and move towards collective action and collaborative solutions.

Awareness of Self and Others. Several interview participants discussed how important it is to be aware of the different roles that one plays in collaboration. Rarely does someone speak for him or herself in collaboration; they usually represent a

complicated collection of individual, organizational, and collaborative interests, as well as various experiences and relationships. Regardless of a collaboration member's intentions when they communicate in a collaboration, any combination of these issues can come into play as other members perceive their identity. Therefore it is important for collaboration members to exercise a high degree of awareness when they communicate, both in terms of themselves and their awareness of others.

Collaboration members need to think about how their ideas might be interpreted within a context of the organization they represent and the interests of other collaborative partners. A city official expressed this idea while discussing how she communicates in the CAN:

> You have to be aware that people could perceive your entity a certain way just because of the kind of entity they are. We're a governmental entity. We're a taxing authority. We're a policy setting organization. So I have to keep that in my mindset when I'm talking to folks because I may be relating to them just one on one executive to executive, but I always represent my organization… I have to remember - or to be mindful - of how others might be perceiving me in my role in this [collaboration] (Allison).

Awareness of self and others requires collaboration members to think of themselves in relation to others, their interests, and other contextual factors that are relevant in any given situation. When people are more aware of how they fit within the broader collaboration and how their interests relate with the interests of others, then

collaborations move beyond merely the sum of the individual parts and are more likely to make progress towards collaborative goals.

Unfortunately this can be difficult for collaboration members to carry out. For most people it is not natural to exercise this level of cognitive complexity in their daily interactions. As one nonprofit employee admitted, "I think, unfortunately, a lot of people aren't very self aware of the different roles that they have" (Jamie). She went on to explain how it seems that many people she interacts with simply do not think through the implications of their comments in the broader context of the collaboration and other members at the table. Some of this comes from being relatively new to the collaboration and not fully appreciating the interconnectedness of the members and their interests; other times it is simply a lack of regard for these dynamics. As another CAN member confessed, it takes a lot of mental energy to think the consequences and possible contingencies of various ideas.

Lack of awareness was demonstrated in a CAN meeting were several collaboration representatives gathered to discuss how they could focus on a handful of primary issues that all the partners could work on. At one point there was a lull in the conversation and the facilitator opened it up for new topics of discussion. One attendee spoke up and said, "Ok, I'll get the conversation going…transportation in this city sucks." This led to a heated discussion about the (perceived) lack of transportation services for certain constituents of various organizations. Of course there were several representatives from different transportation agencies present at the meeting, and this comment did not go over very well. I also noticed several side conversations starting up

and the facilitator seemed to lose control of the conversation. Regardless of the quality of transportation services in the county, the lack of awareness (or blatant disregard) of the transportation representatives and their interests derailed the meeting. Some even called it "the worst meeting [they] attended in a long time" (Nicole). Everyone at the meeting had nameplates with their home organization clearly listed, so it should have been known that a comment like "transportation sucks" might not yield positive interactions. Greater awareness was needed to keep people moving towards collaborative solutions instead of driving them further apart to defend their turf.

Awareness in collaboration requires a level of maturity and discipline that is difficult to achieve. Yet when it happens collaboration members can realize a higher capacity to accomplish collaborative goals. One collaboration member described how he tried to practice this level of awareness when listening to others: "I realize the meeting that we're in, and depending on the meeting, I know more or less the type of hat and responsibility and accountability level that they wear in there. That's important for me to know" (Hector). He then described how he was able to make better decisions and foster more productive relationships as he developed a higher level of awareness of other members, their interests, and how all these things related to each other.

Another example that illustrates this idea involved the building of a new, state-of-the-art homeless facility in the downtown area. Many people who worked in social services recognized the need for a centrally-located, comprehensive homeless facility. However, the downtown business community was strongly against the idea. Many competing interests surrounded this issue. A nonprofit executive director who was

involved in the planning discussed how people came to the table and worked out an agreement (Daniel). He explained how a collaborative solution was reached only because people had an awareness and appreciation for the interests of other stakeholders, and how their self-interests related to the interests of other participants. In the end an agreement was reached and the facility was built. By many accounts it has been a huge success for both the social service providers and the downtown businesses. Other interview participants involved in the planning (Becky & Steven) said this facility simply would not have been built had people not been aware of other stakeholders' interests, and had people not exercised a high degree of self-awareness regarding how their interests came across to other stakeholders. The social service providers had to be aware of the concerns of the downtown business community, as well as their own perceived tendency to not appreciate the economic concerns of business owners. Conversely, the business community developed a greater awareness for the interests of social service providers in a metropolitan area, and displayed a measure of self-awareness in order to overcome perceptions that they do not care about people who are economically disadvantaged. This is an example of a tangible, collaborative outcome that "came into being (Daniel)" through the awareness of self and others in the planning process. Stakeholder identities were constructed and negotiated through continual interaction until a collaborative solution emerged that recognized and appreciated the legitimate interests of all parties involved.

Self-awareness in collaboration obligates members to consider how their identity emerges from representing their interests. Awareness of others helps collaboration

members construct more accurate and robust identities for their collaborative partners. Both are needed in collaboration, where decisions are made based on the perceived identities of people at the table. Stakeholder interests could be represented in ways that result in narrow, simplistic identities that highlight differences and keep collaboration members apart. On the other hand, awareness of self and others provides an opportunity for stakeholders to represent interests in ways that create and sustain identities with more depth and intricacy.

Qualification. Of course the most perceptive and self-aware collaboration member can never fully know or manage the perceptions of other collaborative partners. Data from interview transcripts and meeting observations show that collaboration members also utilize an important communication practice when representing their interests to other stakeholders. This involves an act of qualification to accompany messages that represent various interests. Qualification means that collaboration members reveal the motivations, intentions, and distinctions behind the ideas they represent. A nonprofit employee who participated in numerous collaborations described how she did this:

> So, say I'm the leader and I'm facilitating a conversation about topic "A" and I'm calling on people and allowing them to speak and we're building consensus. And if I'm the only one there from my organization or entity, and I want to comment on that topic as well, then I would need to say, "I'm now going to talk on behalf of my organization. I'm taking off my collaboration leader hat and I'm putting on my organizational [representative] hat. This is my opinion. Blah, blah, blah."

> And then I would need to [go back] and switch gears to facilitate the meeting (Meredith).

Qualification is important because of the multiple "hats" that members wear in collaboration. Also, at any given time there are new members and other people who do not always know about the multiple hats worn by a given speaker. Their nameplate may list a particular organization or agency because that is who they represent in this collaboration, but many of these people belong to other collaborations, sit on boards of other agencies, and volunteer on other projects. They also have personal interests that may extend beyond any of these representations. A member of a hospital network described it this way:

> I need to be careful because I'm not the CEO [of the hospital network], that people understand: I'm saying this, but I'm not saying this as a representative of [the hospital network]. I'm not sure that [the hospital network] feels this way. People need to understand that. I need to understand that what I'm saying is not binding to [the hospital network]. People need to understand and have that same perspective when they give their opinions (Wilson).

This employee was careful to qualify his ideas when representing various interests in collaboration. This gives collaboration members more anchor points to understand a given proposal or suggestion, and helps them interpret these ideas more accurately. If a representative from the major hospital network presents a controversial new idea on behalf of the hospital network, that could have significant implications for the collaboration and how its members react to that message. Conversely, if that same

representative qualifies his comments as mere personal opinion for the sake of discussion, then very different perceptions result. In either case, a particular identity for that stakeholder is created (or sustained) based on the way in which he represented his interests in collaboration.

Another example of qualification happened when members of the CAN Executive Committee presented a new operating framework to other members of the collaboration at a monthly Resource Council meeting. The executive director who explained the new framework began her presentation by saying:

> I present this framework as wearing many different hats... part of the Executive Council, a representative from a Community Action Network partner organization, part of the Administrative Team, but especially as a concerned citizen. I really want you to hear me as that (Rebecca).

She was careful to qualify the multiple interests she represented when communicating these ideas to the other collaboration members. This gave other CAN members more to work with as they interpreted her message and made sense of her identity in the collaboration.

Admittedly, there are times when no amount of qualification can fully compensate for the way other collaboration members chose to interpret a message and perceive peoples' identities. During an informal conversation, one executive director expressed frustration about a series of presentations she gave to various partner organizations. No matter how she qualified her ideas, people kept telling him in private that his presentation had a different perspective "written all over it (Carolyn)." In this instance people did not

believe his qualifications and would not overcome their initial bias against his ideas. Qualification is not a cure-all for representing stakeholder interests in collaboration. In fact, qualification can be used to advance shrewd, political interests by hiding behind the guise of representing other collaborative interests. One interviewee named Jackie described a situation where a member at the table of a CAN collaboration continually qualified their comments by saying that their intentions were to serve the collaboration and involve multiple partners. Yet it became clear that this was a smokescreen to appear collaborative while they advanced their narrow self-interests. This became more obvious as other collaboration members noticed what this particular member organization was doing apart from the CAN collaboration.

Despite the potential for manipulation and abuse, qualification is an important communication practice in collaboration that members can use to construct and negotiate a robust identity. When collaborative partners qualify their ideas within the context of other interests, they present a richer picture of themselves and their interests that others can use to develop more accurate interpretations and perceptions. Qualification can also encourage others to see the interconnectedness of various interests as they are represented through multiple "hats" at the same time. As noted above, the default perception for most people is to see others as representing the interests of their home organization or agency. Qualification helps people overcome this default position, especially when it relevant to convey the multiple interests behind a particular idea. Qualification does have its limits, but overall it serves as a key way that stakeholders construct and negotiate their identities as they represent their interests in collaborative IORs.

Interpersonal Interaction and Self-Disclosure. A final theme related to the ways in which stakeholders in collaborative IORs construct and negotiate their identities involves the role of personal relationships and conversations. As mentioned several times already, the starting point for most people is to see members as representatives of their home organizations or agencies. Yet collaborations need to move beyond the representation of only individual organizational interests in order to achieve collective action and accomplish collaborative goals. One executive director explained how this can happen in collaboration. When asked how she identifies people in collaboration, she explained:

> It depends on how well I know them. I'll be like - that's immigrant lady, or that's literacy guy. I'll have them tagged by issue because sometimes I don't track what organizations they're with. That's the transportation person, that's the homeless person, that's the whatever person. So, I link the person with their issue. *Unless I have some relationship with them outside of that, or interact with them in some other capacity* (Rebecca, emphasis added).

Personal interactions are an important part of identity construction in collaboration. This develops identities beyond single issues and helps other members appreciate the multiple interests that influence the participation of other collaborative partners. Therefore collaboration members seek to find ways to go beyond the narrow identity of their individual interests and communicate a more robust identity that fully captures the complex relationship between personal, organizational, and collaborative interests that exist for any particular collaboration member.

Another executive director talked about the importance of seeing "the totality of the person" (Steven) in collaboration. He said this helps him make better decisions and sustain collaborative relationships with people. When he does not see the whole person and sees only their issue or home organization instead, he is less-likely to have a productive relationship with this person. He said he makes a special point to find ways to convey his whole person (robust identity) to others in collaboration. Incidentally, many people indicated that this executive director was highly-regarded and respected throughout the CAN.

Meetings allow for some amount of identity construction and negotiation, but meetings also have limits on time, discussion topics, and opportunities to speak. Results of my analysis show that many CAN members seek out other opportunities to develop and maintain relationships. Those who do this tend to be identified with a broader range of interests and concerns. A former CAN member described how he developed more complete identities of people as he had more interaction with them and as they disclosed more about themselves:

> So, my view of that person is based on what I know that they are trying to accomplish. But as soon as I find out that she was a mother and a wife and has teenage boys and one of them is in trouble and they are at that congregation in the Jewish community and has a hobby of competitive running - then they become more and more and more a real person. So, over time, in those kinds of settings, everyone began to be acquainted with each other in a more full way (George).

He did not identify this person solely through their comments at meetings; he also got to know her outside of the meetings and interacted with others about various issues. Additionally, this person exercised a degree self-disclosure in order for this information to be known in the first place.

Interpersonal interaction and self-disclosure can also help one's interests in collaboration be perceived more favorably. This is because other collaboration members have more context to understand and appreciate these interests. Consider the following exchange from a research interview with a former CAN member:

Researcher: Does knowing more about somebody and who they are, not just their particular issue, does it make you more sympathetic to their ideas when they are trying to get ideas moved forward at the table?

George: Yeah. And I have to admit, it helps me to build a bias in their favor.

This comment suggests that ideas can be evaluated more favorably to the extent that more is known about the person presenting the ideas; it gives other people a more-developed framework for making sense of the ideas. Thus is it beneficial for collaboration members to actively pursue opportunities for additional interaction and self-disclosure with other collaborative partners.

Data from meeting observations show that CAN members do this in a variety of ways. Some came to meetings early for informal discussions; others stayed after meetings for more interaction. In both these situations people were intentional about connecting with others and initiating conversations that went beyond the specific details of the meeting agenda. Some collaborative partners build these informal interactions into

the fabric of their association. One of the most successful CAN collaborations in the city (recently recognized with a prestigious annual award) meets for happy hour consistently on Friday afternoons. When I asked about this CAN collaboration in informal conversations, many people involved in this collaboration spoke about the quality of relationships among the people at the table, and how these relationships enable them to have more productive meetings and make better decisions. This is because they trusted the people in the collaboration and had a better appreciation for their motives and intentions. Another way of saying this is that the interpersonal interactions helped develop more robust identities among the collaborative partners, which in turn positively influenced their ability to collaborate.

Collaborations are not just a collection of multiple interests that are negotiated in a detached, objective fashion. Collaborations consist of real people who have personal, organization, and collaborative concerns in addition to the narrow, professional interests they represent as part of a single organization. Data analysis shows that more interaction, communication, and dialogue help collaborative partners create and maintain a robust identity that is understood and valued by others. Interpersonal interaction and self-disclose are important communicative practices associated with identity construction and negotiation in collaboration. Collaborators who appreciate this are may have beneficial collaborative relationships that achieve both personal and collective goals.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present the results of a 10-month study of interorganizational collaboration that involved in-depth interviews and field observations

of the Community Action Network. Four research questions guided this investigation, with a specific focus on leadership, participation, and stakeholder representation. The goal was to better understand the role of communication in these collaborative processes and the communication practices associated with successful collaborative partnerships. This will help develop communicative theories of collaboration, particularly the social practices that create and sustain collaborative relationships in the nonprofit sector.

RQ1 asked how collective action is facilitated in collaborative IORs without a formal authority structure. Results indicate successful collaborations exhibit a type of distributed leadership that mediates between common and competing interests and is sustained through the communication practices of casting vision, translating, asking, and listening. RQ2 asked about the nature of stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs. Data suggest a form of authentic participation is needed that is both provided to collaborations from its members and provided to members from collaborations. Authentic participation provided *to* members involves voice and opportunity; authentic participation provided *from* members includes contribution and commitment. RQ3 asked about potential tensions that could emerge from the participation of multiple stakeholders in collaborative IORs. Analysis revealed three communicative tensions that exist: (1) tensions of focus and inclusion, (2) tensions of talk and action, and (3) tensions of sector discourses (nonprofit, governmental, and business). Instead of resolving these tensions, the focus is on how collaboration members co-create a collaborative discourse that synthesizes the qualities of each tension in order to transcend the limitations of any one side of a tension operating in isolation.

The first part of RQ4 asked whose interests stakeholders represent in collaboration. Results indicate that the majority of collaboration members come to the table to represent the interests of their home organizations or agencies, and this is also how they see others in the collaboration. Conversely, the same people recognize that collaboration has to be more than just competition or negotiation between individual interests; stakeholders must pursue their self interests within the broader framework of collaboration interests in order for either to be realized.

The challenge is to define the collaboration goals in such a way that individual stakeholders can help accomplish these goals while simultaneously pursing the interests of their home organizations. The second part of RQ4 asked how stakeholder interests are represented in various collaborative activities. Initial observations reveal that meeting minutes, liaisons, and invited presentations are the primary way that stakeholder interests are represented in the Community Action Network. However results further indicate that the representation of interests throughout the collaboration is problematic. Issues of accuracy and consistency are troublesome because of the complexity of collaborative partnerships and the overwhelming amount of information being exchanged. A final theme that emerged from this section of data involved how identities are created and maintained through the process of stakeholder interest representation. The data show that collaboration members wear a variety of "hats" based on the multiple interests they represent, and these hats constitute their identity in collaboration. Results show that collaboration members can develop a robust identity in collaboration through two primary means: (1) awareness of self and others, and (2) qualification. These are also

ways that collaboration members continually negotiate their identities. Furthermore, the data demonstrate that interpersonal interaction and self-disclosure are also important aspects of identity maintenance in collaboration. These results also suggest that collaborations work better when the people at the table have more-developed identities and see more depth in the identities of others.

Overall these data show the importance of communication and human interaction in the development and maintenance of interorganizational collaborative relationships in the nonprofit sector. In addition to identifying several important communication practices that help foster collaboration, the results also indicate the difficulties involved with communication in collaborative partnerships: tensions emerge, stakeholder representation is problematic, and identities are constantly changing. As complicated as collaboration may be, collective action is possible when people understand and appreciate the role of communication as a dynamic, constitutive aspect of collaborative partnerships, not just mere message exchange. Collaborators can then begin focusing on communication in collaboration not just as channels and amounts, but more importantly as the essential element in the co-creation of a social reality that enables collective action and produces collaborative solutions.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the communication processes of leadership and stakeholder participation within the context of interorganizational collaboration in order to advance knowledge of interorganizational communication, especially in the nonprofit sector. The goal was also to better understand the practices of human interaction that foster collaborative relationships among organizations, particularly health and human service organizations. This gives much-needed attention to the *process* of interorganizational collaboration, which complements the literature's dominant focus on antecedent conditions and outcomes. This study also draws more attention to the important social issues of communication and interaction in interorganizational collaboration, beyond the economic and resource-based theories so prevalent in past research. This was accomplished through ten months of ethnographic field observations of the Community Action Network (CAN), a collection of agencies that collaborate for social service provision in Central Texas. Fifty-three in-depth interviews with CAN members were also completed as part of this research. Finally, a broad overview of CAN meeting documents, listserv emails, and event flyers helped provide a more nuanced understanding of this collaboration and its members. Overall this study yields significant insight about important communication practices of leadership and stakeholder participation involved in collaboration among organizations in the nonprofit sector. The remainder of this chapter discusses the key findings and contributions of this research, implications for theory development, limitations of the study, and directions for future research.

Key Findings and Contributions

This research makes three primary contributions: (1) detailing how leadership functions in collaborative IORs to facilitate collective action despite the lack of formal authority structures, (2) explaining the nature of stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs and the communicative tensions that result from the participation of multiple organizational stakeholders, and (3) clarifying how stakeholder interests are represented in collaboration, and how these representation processes contribute to the identity negotiation of collaborative participants. Key findings for each primary contribution are discussed below.

Collaboration Leadership

Interorganizational collaboration immediately raises questions about leadership because there is less clarity about the lines of authority and influence. Organizational roles can be more complex in IOR collaborations than in hierarchical and single-organization arrangements (Heide, 1994), and the frequent ambiguity of collaborative partners can complicate the authority structure and decision-making capacity of collaborative IORs (Huxham & Vangen, 2000). This certainly does not mean that collaboration is non-existent in hierarchical organizations, but rather the interorganizational dynamics of collaborative IORs complicate traditional understandings of authority and influence. Collaboration members associate with each other through informal (and usually voluntary) connections that are rarely controlled by superior/subordinate relationships. Yet collaboration still requires influence towards goal achievement in order to make progress. Therefore a form of leadership is needed that

appreciates these informal connections, but is also able to exercise authority and influence towards collective action. There must also be recognition of the permeable boundaries and flexible role structures that tend to be characteristic of collaborative IORs.

A key finding from this study is that collaboration calls for a form of leadership that is distributed throughout the collaborative partners and mediates between common and competing interests. Leadership is a relational property that exists among the ongoing interactions between collaborative partners as they negotiate their interests in order to achieve collective action and accomplish both individual and collaborative goals. Authority cannot be exercised unilaterally, but instead resides in the group and their consent to a given idea or proposal. Authority to move the collaboration forward happens when leadership is enacted by various collaboration members as they influence this consent process by visibly relegating self-interests within the larger framework of collaborative interests. This involves finding ways to combine individual and collective goals in ways that are seen and recognized by other collaboration members. Specific communication practices are associated with this form of leadership, including the ability to cast a collaborative vision, translating collaborative ideas so they are relevant for various stakeholders, and asking questions to foster interaction. These communication practices are all supported by active listening, which gives people then necessary inputs to cast vision, translate, and ask questions. This form of leadership is perceived to enable collaborations to sustain collective action despite the lack of formal authority structures.

However, this may be an idealized form of leadership that masks some of the authority tensions that can exist in collaborative IORs. The interview participants spoke very positively about many of their experiences and ideas of leadership. It certainly is true that many collaboration members perceive the Community Action Network as a successful collaboration, but it is also the case that there are many frustrations and tensions that exist below the surface. There are questions about the future direction of this collaboration and the way in which leadership should function under the direction of a new executive director and staff. The first 10-15 years of the CAN was primarily focused on getting people to the table and sustaining a conversation about resource allocation and information sharing, but now the members recognize the power of their network. They have been able to assemble many of the major players in social service delivery; now there is a strong sense that they should be taking substantial action and leveraging their influence.

What does this mean for collaborative leadership? There are real difficulties facing the CAN and its continual pursuit of collective action, and leadership practice may be a significant source of these tensions. For example, the new executive director was hired with a clear mandate to implement sustainability indicators and to narrow the focus of the CAN's collaborative activity. In private conversations, the executive director talked about the continual struggle of trying to remain inclusive but also meeting the performance objective of her job responsibilities. This means a substantial amount of back channel communication and behind-the-scenes conversations in order to keep things in balance. She consistently mentioned having to "put out fires" after meetings when

people did not connect with the ideas discussed in the meetings, or to make sure people who were not vocal at the meeting were not upset. This relates to the communication practices of casting vision and translating mentioned above, but it is a more "messy" than the idealized from of leadership communication most interview participants discussed.

Another consequence of this may be an unwillingness to engage in conflict or difficult interactions in fear of people leaving the table. Yet group communication research continues to show the importance of vigilant interaction in order for groups to make quality decisions and remain productive (see Gouran & Hirokawa, 1986; Hirokawa & Rost, 1992; Hirokawa, 1988; Oetzel, 1995). When leadership privileges the idea of a collaborative vision at the expense of confronting legitimate issues in the group, this may encourage a norm of non-confrontation that is eventually detrimental to the development of the collaboration. This results in a leadership paradox: leadership communication can deflect conflict in order to keep people at the table, but this same deflection could result in inactivity that eventually pushes people away from the collaboration. The challenge for collaboration leadership to foster a healthy level of constructive criticism and interaction while striving for inclusiveness and keeping people at the table.

Furthermore, what does this mean for the role of collaboration meetings and leadership communication if the real "work" gets done outside these meetings? Do meetings then provide a sense of organizational legitimacy to validate the behind-the-scenes network that drives collective action? Do leaders threaten the collaborative ideal if they are perceived as strategic and focused? A further consequence may be a growing separation between the collaboration leadership that is demonstrated in public meetings

and conversations versus the actual leadership practices used to keep the collaboration moving forward outside these meetings. In addition to altruistic motives of wanting to serve needy populations, social service collaborative IORs also from for political and strategic reasons that should not be overlooked (Keyton & Stallworth, 2003). People also come to the table out of fear of being left out of important decisions or missing key resource opportunities (Lewis, 2006). The lack of traditional authority structures, the ambiguity of identities, and the permeable boundaries of collaborative IORs do present opportunities for strategic manipulation and political influence, especially through practices of leadership. This is because many collaborative arrangements, decisions, and policies are informal and the product of social relations that are not always transparent and accessible to all members. Therefore an opportunity exists for people in leadership positions to exploit these networks in ways that privilege certain interests above others.

Although not a dominant theme in this study, the data do hint at these sorts of tensions and complications. For example, a number of interview participants gave cliché answers when asked about their conceptions of good collaboration leadership communication: clear, concise, to the point, take charge, decisive, focused direction, etc. Yet many times these forms of leadership communication resulted in conflict and disagreement, even from people who said this was the way leadership communication should function. One interviewee in particular described her preference for this cliché-type of leadership communication, but when asked to describe a situation of bad leadership communication she discussed a situation where this type of leadership communication was actually practiced. Rather than being effective leadership

communication, it now became domineering, controlling, manipulative, and narrow-minded. A possible conclusion is that there is a delicate balance regarding the alignment of stakeholder interests and perceptions of leadership communication. When interests align, leadership communication that is clear, concise, and decisive is viewed as favorable; stakeholders value the ability of this leadership to move forward and make progress. However, when interests do not align, this same type of leadership communication is viewed as coercive and controlling; now stakeholders want more discussion and consideration before making decisions.

What does this all mean for our understanding of leadership communication in collaborative IORs? First of all, it suggests a tension between realism and idealism when it comes to authority and influence among collaboration stakeholders. Should collaborations be understood as sites of political power struggles, where leadership communication should be instrumental and pragmatic? Or is it better for members to pursue an ideal form of collaboration that privileges cooperation and collective solutions, where leadership communication seeks to transcend self-interested tendencies? Perhaps it is a balance between both, the way things are and the way things could/should be. If this is the case, then a leadership challenge in collaboration is to communicate in ways that both navigate through the political realities and move the collaboration towards a more cooperative vision.

Stakeholder Participation

Like any other organization, collaborative partnerships are the product of various stakeholder relationships and negotiations (Mumby, 1988; Putnam, 1989). Therefore it is

important to understand how these stakeholders participate in collaboration in order to achieve individual and collective goals, and the consequences that result from their participation. Vangen and Huxham (2003) point out that past collaboration research often emphasizes the participation of multiple stakeholders. Yet most of this research focuses on participation as a static variable (participation/non participation) instead of a "dynamic, interactive process" (Marshall & Stohl, 1993, p. 137). Furthermore, the majority of previous participation research presumes a formal employee/employer relationship and looks at how subordinate employees are included in upper-level decision making. Collaboration, however, assumes equality among members and usually involves voluntary relationships (even if true equality is never/rarely achieved).

Authentic Participation In contrast to hierarchical organizations where employee participation might be one of many strategies management utilizes to improve productivity, satisfaction, etc., collaborative IORs are inherently participatory structures that require involvement from multiple stakeholders in order to achieve collective action. Not only does this involve participation in decision-making processes, but also participation at many other levels, including attendance at meetings, contributing to discussions, and serving on subcommittees. Thus another key finding of this study is that stakeholder participation is a reciprocal process that both enables stakeholders to advance their interests and gives collaborations the necessary input to make progress toward individual and collective goals. Productive collaborations necessitate a form of authentic participation that is both provided *to* individual members by a collaborative structure through voice and opportunity, and provided *from* individual members to collaborations

through contribution and commitment. When this form of participation is fostered a collaboration gains input necessary to sustain and develop: when members see legitimate opportunities to advance goals and are given voice, they in turn are more motivated to make contributions and commitments to the collaboration. When this form of participation is absent a vicious cycle emerges that can threaten a collaboration's existence: if collaboration members are not given voice and do not perceive opportunities to advance goals, then they are less likely to commit and contribute to the collaboration. Authentic participation (and the corresponding subcategories of voice, opportunity, contribution, and commitment) is a communicative process that plays out in the ongoing interactions among collaboration members and organizations.

Of course not all representatives or organizations may desire authentic participation. Some may prefer a level of symbolic participation that gives them the credit of association but requires little of their time and resources. The data suggest that many IOR collaborations eventually recognize this free-riding problem and push members towards more authentic forms of participation. Tensions can also arise when there are discrepancies between individual representatives and their home organizations over the desired level of participation. It may be the case that a particular representative wants to participate authentically in the collaboration, but the decision makers back at the home organization only want symbolic participation (they want their representative to show up at the meetings but not get involved in other projects or commitments).

As participation becomes less and less authentic, the development and progress of the collaboration can be threatened. This does not necessarily mean the organization will

die out. Otherwise only healthy, productive collaborations would be in existence. However, the informal nature of some IORs means that external forces (such as major political players or key financial donors) can maintain the appearance of collaboration long after practically utility has vanished. Yet this is better understood as "pseudo-collaboration" because people are not actually working *together* to achieve individual and collective goals; they only exist as a nominal partnership on paper. This relates to the distinction that Keyton, et al. (2006) make between "collaboration" and "collaborating." A dysfunctional association of stakeholders who do not actually work together but maintain the appearance of functionality (i.e., website, occasional meetings, etc.) may at some level technically be called "a collaboration," but should not be understood "as collaborating." They may begin to resemble other interorganizational arrangements, but not a *collaborative* IOR. In this way authentic participation helps distinguish between groups that are actually collaborating versus "pseudo-collaboration" that exist as a mere symbolic representation and a nominal association of stakeholders. These data show how understanding the communication practices of authentic participation can help navigate through the multiple layers and levels of participation that individuals and organizations may exhibit in interorganizational relationships.

It may also be the case that inauthentic participation has certain strategic and/or political benefits in the short run, but eventually this behavior will succumb to the same free-rider problems that plague other forms of collective action: if collaboration members see advantages of free-riding, more and more will exhibit free-riding; but the more free-riding that happens the less advantageous it becomes until collective action is eliminated.

Inauthentic participation might result in some immediate benefits, but as more collaboration members see these benefits and also exhibit inauthentic participation, the collaboration begins to dissolve until it either disappears or remains only as a pseudo-collaboration.

One important qualification, however, involves the actual purpose of participating in a collaborative IOR. Symbolic participation or pseudo-collaboration may in fact have practical value for the stakeholders involved, even if there are not tangible benefits for the intended service recipients. For example, several government agencies concerned about their negative public image may form a symbolic coalition to give the appearance of coordination and cooperation, even though nothing changes in their day-to-day operations. They are in fact working together to achieve individual and collective goals, but it is a self-contained system that only benefits those within the system, not some external constituency group. Therefore authentic participation may not be relevant or appropriate in this case. This type of collaboration may not require stakeholders to have voice and opportunity in order to function, and it may not require substantive contribution or commitment by the members.

The task that remains is figuring out what level/form of participation is necessary and sufficient for actual collaboration between multiple organizations. The data from this study suggest a high standard of authentic participation that is both provided to members from the collaboration (voice and opportunity) and provided to the collaboration from members (contribution and commitment). Certainly this idealized form of participation qualifies as collaboration, but it also seems that organizations can have productive

relationships together with less. The next step of this research is to specify the necessary and sufficient conditions of participation that foster collaborative IORs, or the conditions in which authentic participation is in fact necessary and/or sufficient for collaborative relationships between organizations (see Lewis, 2006). This could involve a typology of stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs based of differing motivations, agendas, and purposes, which would help us learn more about specific communication practices associated with different levels of participation that are embedded within the multiple layers of collaboration in IORs.

Sector Discourse Tensions An additional finding is that the participation of multiple stakeholders in IOR collaboration gives rise to a number of communicative tensions between conflicting ideals. Tensions of focus/inclusion, talk/action, and sector discourses (nonprofit, governmental, and business) permeate the collaborative process and require collaboration members to oscillate between these differing principles in order to foster collective action. Instead of resolving these tensions, the focus is on how collaboration members co-create a collaborative discourse that synthesizes the qualities of each tension in order to transcend the limitations of any one side of a tension operating in isolation.

The reality of these tensions demonstrates the complicated environment that exists for the process of collaboration and the necessity of quality communication practices in order to navigate these pressures and maintain progress towards collective action. It is difficult for collaboration members to hold these tensions in balance. People in the Community Action Network had a tendency to gravitate towards either extreme in an

attempt to resolve the pressure. Yet resolution may not be the most productive course of action. Instead, this research suggests that collaborative IORs are sites of inherent tensions that naturally occur with the participation of multiple stakeholders (who intern have multiple interests). These tensions actually drive the interaction that moves collaborations towards collaborative solutions. This gives us a better understanding of how stakeholder communication both creates these tensions in collaborative IORs, but also is the vehicle by which these tensions are balanced and used to generate collective action.

One consequence of these tensions is the problem of communicating across sectors. The differences between sector discourses are not merely arbitrary; they reflect strongly-held values and beliefs about the nature of society and human organizing. Collaboration members who span boundaries across sectors will likely confront numerous barriers as various stakeholders defer to their respective sector discourses in order to legitimate their individual interests. Business professionals may resist a certain program because of its inefficiencies, nonprofit executives might prefer the program because it includes more needy constituents, and government officials might want a different program that is more politically advantageous. The problem is that these sector discourses are always available for stakeholders to utilize if they want to resist collective action or if they simply cannot imagine a collaborative discourse that could transcend sector differences. This is especially challenging for people in leadership positions who are most likely to span boundaries across sectors in order to engage multiple stakeholders. When collaboration members only interact based on the values and

language of their individual sector, it is likely that collaborative solutions will not emerge across sectors without resorting to political or economic power as the final arbitrator.

Stakeholder Interest Representation

Collaborations are a collection of stakeholder interests. However, these interests do not exist a priori and they are not static; they are socially constructed and negotiated through ongoing interactions between collaboration members and continually expressed in symbolic artifacts. Therefore an important issue related to stakeholder participation is the representation of stakeholder interests in the participation processes of collaboration – *whose* interests are represented, *how* are these interests represented in collaboration, and even how they are socially constructed in the first place.

The majority of collaboration members come to the table to represent the interests of their home organizations or agencies, and this is also how they see others in the collaboration. Yet a key finding from this research is that collaboration members also recognize that collaboration must be more than just competition or negotiation between individual interests; stakeholders must pursue their self interests within the broader framework of collaboration interests in order for either to be realized. Collaboration members who continually represent narrow self interests and assume that this is the best way to advance these interests in collaboration will likely find their interests continually marginalized as a collaboration progresses. Even though collaboration members expect people to be at the table in pursuit of some individual or organizational goal, they are also sensitive to the fact that these goals must be in relation to collective goals that motivate the existence of the collaboration in the first place. Thus collaboration members

continually wrestle with ways to communicate both individual and collective goals simultaneously when representing stakeholder interests in collaboration.

Another important finding associated with stakeholder interest representation in collaboration has to do with the problematic nature of the processes used to represent these interests. Meeting minuets, liaisons, and invited presentations have problems with accuracy and consistency that are difficult to overcome, given the amount of people involved in a collaboration and the amount of information that needs to be represented. Yet accurate and consistent interest representation is critical in collaboration, which depends on the collective perceptions of members in relation to each others' interests. Therefore another key finding of this study is the importance of developing a robust identity as a member of a collaboration. Collaborations seem to be perceived as more productive when members have fully-developed identities and see more depth in the identities of other collaborators. This happens through awareness of self and others, qualification of statements when representing interests, and interpersonal interaction and self-disclosure outside of formal meetings. When this happens, stakeholders are able to more-completely represent their interests and demonstrate how their interests relate to other collaboration members and the collective goals of the collaboration.

These key findings about leadership, stakeholder participation, and interest representation all show the importance of communication practices in the development and progress of collaborative IORs. They demonstrate the need for collaboration members to understand how their interactions create and influence a social reality that is continually reshaped in order to achieve collective action between organizations.

Ignoring these important communication processes leaves collaborations as just a collection of competing interests understood in purely economic and/or political terms, instead of the dynamic, interactive, and social environments they actually are. The findings from this study contribute to an understanding of interorganizational collaboration as social process that happens through frequent interactions between stakeholders who seek to achieve both individual and collective goals.

Theoretical Implications

In addition to these key findings, this study has several theoretical implications for our understanding of interorganizational relationships, collaboration, and organizational communication.

Interorganizational Relationships

One important theoretical implication of this research is that it strengthens our understanding of the processes that create and sustain stakeholder connections in collaborative interorganizational relationships. Past IOR literature has largely focused on the antecedent conditions that precede the formation of IORs and various outcomes associated with IOR activity (see Barringer & Harrison, 2000 and Oliver, 1990 for reviews). A less-developed area of IOR research involves the social processes and practices that make these organizational relationships function. Much of the previous IOR literature views communication mainly in terms of channels and amounts, meaning that "communication problems" are technical in nature and can be fixed by fine-tuning the traditional sender-channel-receiver model. Instead, the present study moves the IOR literature towards a constitutive view of communication, seeing communication as an

essential element in the organizing process that enables collaborative partners to co-create a social reality that fosters or constrains collective action. Miller, et al. (1995) claimed that previous IOR scholarship does not sufficiently consider organizational communication. This study assumes the value of organizational communication as a starting point for investigation, yielding important insights about the communication practices of leadership and stakeholder participation in the developmental processes of IORs.

Within the more specific context if collaborative IORs, this research helps clarify the role of communication, especially in terms of leadership and stakeholder participation. One of the most developed models of IOR collaboration in the literature thus far is Huxham and Vangen's (2005) descriptive model of collaborative advantage. They claim that collaboration members must work diligently and intentionally to achieve collaborative advantage (the desired outcome of collaboration) by overcoming collaborative inertia (the default position of inactivity). This is similar to an aircraft that practices the laws of aerodynamics (collaborative advantage) in order to overcome the laws of gravity (collaborative inertia). Although Huxham and Vangen (2005) do list communication as a component in their model, they do little to explicate the concept; saying only that collaboration members should "Pay attention to communication… watch your jargon…find clear ways to express yourself…don't be afraid to seek clarification (p. 37)." While confirming the basic tenets of Huxham and Vangen's (2005) theory, the present study also extends the theory by explicating the concept of communication in the key areas of leadership and participation. The present study provides additional support

for the opposing forces of collaborative inertia and collaborative advantage, and results show how leadership communication and stakeholder participation can both enable a collaboration to overcome the power of collaborative inertia. Leadership plays a critical role in motivating members to embrace a collaborative vision that leads to collective action and move that vision forward; participation ensures that a collaboration has the necessary inputs and that collaboration members have legitimate outlets for the realization of individual and collective goals. To extend the above illustration, leadership is the engine that gets an airplane off the ground and keeps it moving; participation involves the mechanical workings of the airplane that enable it to function and allow the individual parts to operate correctly. Thus an important implication of this research is that it extends the collaborative IOR literature beyond simplistic understandings of communication as mere message exchange, and instead shows how communication practices of leadership and participation actually constitute collaborative relationships between organizations.

Another important implication of this research is extending the theoretical understandings of IORs beyond economic and resource-based theories of organizing. Barringer and Harrison's (2000) extensive review of the IOR literature identifies the main theoretical perspectives that drive IOR scholarship. These include transaction cost economics (Williamson, 1975, 1991, 1998), resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), strategic choice theory (Jarillo, 1986; Kogut, 1988; Shan, 1990), stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1994), institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), and learning theory (Hamel, 1991; Mowery, Oxley, & Silverman, 1996). In contrast, this

study sees leadership and participation in collaborative IORs as inherently communicative and social processes, not purely rational and economic. This research recognizes and appreciates the irrational tensions and paradoxes that emerge from the participation of multiple stakeholders, and the artistic, discursive nature of leadership needed to move collaboration towards collective action. The present study implies that knowledge of how collaborative IORs actually work comes from research that goes beyond economic or resource-based understandings and instead privileges the social and communicative processes that create and sustain these organizational connections.

Collaboration

Another area where this research has important implications is the development of collaboration theory within the field of communication. To date the most extensive models of collaboration and communication are Lewis' (2006) model of collaborative interaction and Keyton, et al's. (2006) meso-level model of collaboration. Lewis' (2006) model focuses on the inputs that that enable collaboration (status differences, skills, and motivations), the processes that sustain collaboration (identity negotiation, mutual exchanges, and collaborative skills), and the outcomes that result from collaboration (goal accomplishment and sustainability). The present study both confirms many aspects of this model and expands our knowledge of how these components function in collaboration. A primary area of confirmation involves the continual identity negotiation between collaboration members. This research shows the significance of identity negotiation in collaboration, especially as collaboration members communicate their interests and how their individual interests relate to other stakeholders and collaborative

interests. Collaboration is more productive when collaborators develop robust identities through continual interaction, awareness, and qualification. Collaboration members who maintain narrow identities that consist only of individual interests will likely find those interests marginalized in collaboration that requires the subordination of individual interests to the collective interests of the partnership. An important implication of this research is that it provides important empirical evidence of how collaborators negotiate their identities and the consequences of these negotiations on the development of a collaborative partnership.

Additionally, the present study helps extend the Lewis (2006) model by detailing some of the specific processes that her model identifies at a conceptual level. For example, Lewis (2006) talks about the need for future research to identify the "generative mechanism" (p. 237) to initiate collaboration and move collaborative partnerships towards action. The present study shows how leadership can function as a generative mechanism in collaboration. This happens as people enact leadership by communicating a collaborative vision that motivates people towards action, as they translate collaborative ideals in ways that are relevant and meaningful for specific partners, and as they ask questions that stimulate interaction among collaborators. These are all examples of how leadership functions as a generative mechanism to promote collaboration among stakeholders and move these organizational partnerships towards collective action. It is not clear from this research whether leadership is *the* generative mechanism that the Lewis (2006) model desires to account for all collaboration, but leadership certainly plays

an important generative role in collaborative partnerships and clarifies this aspect of the Lewis (2006) model as it relates to IOR collaboration.

A second area where the implications of this research help extend the Lewis (2006) model involves developing a greater understanding of the "communicative resources" (p. 229) that are mutually exchanged between collaborators. Lewis (2006) demonstrates that a major theme of the collaboration literature is the reciprocal exchange of communication resources. These may include perspective, guidance, hints, strategies, praise and encouragement (Berg, Meegan, & Deviney, 1998), reasoning, argumentation, equality, and joint meaning (Kumpalanian & Kaartinen, 2003), understanding (Clark, et al., 1996), trust (Medved, et al., 2001), and questions and critiques (Iverson & McPhee, 2002). The present study suggests that stakeholder participation should also be considered an important communicative resource in collaboration. In contrast to the above communicative resources that are things exchanged between collaborators, stakeholder participation is different type of communicative resource. It is not necessarily exchanged between collaborators, but instead is a communication practice that both enables collaborators to realize individual and collective interests, as well as provides collaborative partnerships the necessary communicative inputs in order to sustain collective action. Stakeholder participation is not a resource traded between collaborators (such as money exchanged between clients), but rather a structural resource that enables exchanges to happen and perpetuate (like a financial market). Yet stakeholder participation is nonetheless communicative, and thus should be considered a communicative resource in collaboration. This helps extend the communicative resource

component of Lewis' (2006) model by showing how the communication infrastructure of collaboration is also an important communicative resource.

The Keyton, et al. (2006) meso-level model of collaboration offers a different (though complimentary) perspective on communication and collaboration. Specifically focusing on collaboration between organizations, they see communication as the essence of collaboration, which is best studied from a meso-level perspective that addresses individual, group, organizational, and public frames simultaneously. The present study confirms two important aspects of this model. First, Keyton, et al. (2006) detail several tensions that exist in collaboration: public/private, impact/investment, individuals/organizations, collaborating/collaboration. These tensions are discursive in nature and emerge because collaborators interact within the context of multiple frames. The present study identifies other communicative tensions (focus/inclusion, talk/action, and sector discourses) that arise because of the involvement of multiple stakeholders. This adds further empirical validation to the notion that dialectical tensions abound in IOR collaboration, and that any comprehensive theory of collaboration must account for the inherent irrationality of organizing within these partnerships.

Second, this research supports Keyton, et al.'s (2006) emphasis on the negotiated order (Gray, 1989) of collaborative processes. They demonstrate that who participates and how they participate are critical to the negotiated order of IOR collaboration. The present study further demonstrates this by explicating a reciprocal view of stakeholder participation and showing how this contributes to the negotiated order of collaboration, both in terms of the voice and opportunity collaborations provide to members, and the

contribution and commitment that members provide to collaborations. This has important implications for the development of a meso-level theory of collaboration because it shows how the communicative practices of stakeholder participation contribute to the social framework that is simultaneously negotiated within individual, group, organizational, and public frames. It goes beyond the mere identification of stakeholder groups and representatives specified in the Keyton, et al. (2006) model and shows how they participate in collaboration, whose interests they represent, and how these communicative processes influence the development of collaboration.

A final area where this research has important implications for collaboration theory involves the relationship between talk and action in collaborative IORs. The linguistic turn in organizational studies magnified the understanding of discourse as situated with social structures and simultaneously comprising those same structures (e.g., Giddens, 1984). Within the context of IOR collaboration, Hardy, Lawrence, and Philips (1998) describe how meaning is produced through human interactions, and how these conversations have the potential to elicit action among collaborative partners. They claim that "collective action is generated by conversational activity and content that produce shared meanings" (Hardy, et al., 1998, p. 20). They go on to explain the importance of *who* is involved in these conversations and *what* they discuss. This points to the significance of stakeholder participation and the processes of interest representation in collaborative IORs, a primary focus of the present study. If talk that leads to action comes from the right people saying the right things (Hardy, et al., 1998),

then it is important for collaboration theory to account for *how* collaborations involve the right people and *how* the right ideas show up at the table.

Additionally, the present study highlights the inherent tension between talk and action in collaborative IORs. This has important theoretical implications for the discursive approach of Hardy, et al. (1998) because it demonstrates the contested relationship between process and product in collaboration. Action does not happen without planning and discussion, but too much talk (or the wrong talk) can paralyze collaboration and stifle collective action. Further development of a discursive approach to collaboration must pay attention to how stakeholders negotiate a productive balance that fosters interaction and results in collective action. For example, is there a "tipping point" or transition from talk to action? Is it ever the case that talk ceases and action happens, or is there always a level of discussion present even when action happens? The reality of this tension has important implications for how we think about the value of talk in collaboration and its relation to collective action among collaborative partners.

Organizational Communication

This research also has important theoretical implications for the overall discipline of organizational communication. First, it contributes to our understanding of macro organizational dynamics and helps respond to Jones, et al.'s (2004) call for the development of macro organizational communication theory. Collaborative IORs are complex macro structures that involve many different organizational cultures and norms, and many times even cross-sector associations. This research demonstrates the importance of understanding these macro factors in terms of leadership and stakeholder

participation in collaborative IORs, and points towards important communication practices that should be included in any macro theory of organizational relationships.

Second, this research has important implications for the development of organizational theory that is communication-specific. Communication scholars lament the lack of theory that is unique to organizational communication (Taylor, Flanigan, Cheney, & Seibold, 2001; Tompkins & Wanca-Thibault, 2001). As Lewis (in press) explains, organizational communication scholars tend to rely on other disciplines to provide the theoretical and conceptual foundations for the field. In contrast, the present study begins with the assumption that communication is foundational to the constitution of collaborative IORs, and these partnerships represent a social reality that is co-created and continually negotiated through human interaction and symbol use. This moves our understanding of collaborative IORs beyond economic and resource-dependence theories of organizing and instead highlights the important social dynamics that create and sustain these organizational relationships. This research gives scholars an empirical understanding of how a communication perspective on collaborative IORs can account for important phenomena, thus contributing to the development of communicative organizational theory.

Furthermore, this relates to Kuhn and Ashcraft's (2003) call for a communicative theory of the firm; the present study contributes to a communicative theory of collaborative IORs. Lewis (2006) and Keyton, et al. (2006) both provide (pre) theoretical models for collaboration that apply to IORs. The present study confirms and extends many ideas from these models and points to important concepts that need to be

considered in the development of a communicative theory of collaborative IORs. In particular, a communicative theory of IORs will account for the ways in which specific practices of leadership communication initiate collaborative interaction and sustain collective action. Additionally, a communicative theory can utilize the present study to demonstrate how stakeholder participation elicits the necessary inputs to enable a collaborative structure, which in turn provides communicative entry points to stakeholders that encourage and sustain their participation. A communicative theory of collaborative IORs should also explain how collaboration happens (or does not happen) as people continually oscillate within communicative tensions that emerge from the participation of multiple stakeholders. Overall this research responds to Putnam and Poole's (1987) continuing call to study the "interactions that bridge organizations and processes that compose institutions" (p. 583). The present study is a specific investigation of such interactions and processes, with a particular focus on leadership communication and stakeholder participation in collaborative IORs.

Finally, the present study has important theoretical implications for our understanding of collective action, especially within the discipline of organizational communication. Recent scholarship in organizational communication emphasizes the communicative constitution of collective action (e.g., Olufowote, 2006). Of particular interest is the extensive work of Bimber, Flanagin, & Stohl (2005) and Flanagin, Stohl, & Bimber (2006) who reconceptualization of collective action is communicative in nature, based on the mode of interpersonal interaction and the mode of engagement that shapes interaction. The present study supports this communicative conception of collective

action by showing how certain practices of leadership communication and stakeholder participation foster (or hinder) collective action in collaborative IORs. Additionally, Bimber, et al.'s (2005) focus on boundary crossing as the warrant for their reconceptualization is also confirmed by the present study. Collaborative IORs exist as groups of boundary spanners who continually interact to shape their negotiate order. This means that collective action is inherently communicative as action results from specific conversations, agreements, and decision-making processes between these boundary spanners. The present study supports this current scholarship and gives further validation to the idea of collective action as a communicative phenomenon, in contrast to a detached economic theory focused solely on public goods, free riders, discrete decisions, and formal coordination.

The present study has important implications for building communicative theories of organizing, especially within the context of collaborative IORs, and the overall development of organizational communication theory. This research furthers our understanding of how human interaction and social processes influence the development of collaborative partnerships, and the role of communication in creating and sustaining collective action through leadership and stakeholder participation. This moves communication out of the periphery as a mere tool of information exchange in already-established organizational partnerships, instead making it a central feature of the organizing process and the way collective action happens in collaborative IORs.

Limitations

Despite the important findings and implications of this research, there are also some limitations. First, this research is limited by the perspectives included among the interview participants. All the interview participants were people actively involved in the Community Action Network and favorably disposed towards collaboration. These people did discuss various frustrations and complications associated with collaboration in the Community Action Network, but criticisms were always very constructive; they were not the perspectives of outsiders who avoid collaboration or were substantial critics of the CAN. It may have been helpful to balance the current interview data with perspectives that counter the optimistic, insider view of CAN members. This could provide valuable insights about why people avoid collaboration and the communication practices that prevent collaborative IORs.

Second, this research is limited by a lack of connection to specific outcome measures. The Community Action Network does not currently record formal indicators to measure the outcomes of their collaborative activity (although there is a clear move in this direction). Therefore I was not able to connect the conclusions about leadership and stakeholder participation to specific measures that could indicate the success (or failure) of the CAN. This research relied on anecdotal evidence and self-report information to determine which collaborative efforts were successful and why. This is not completely irrelevant; there is much evidence that organizational effectiveness in the nonprofit sector is socially constructed and that outcome indicators are limiting and potentially dangerous (Herman & Renz, 1999). Still, it would be helpful to have some quantitative,

longitudinal measures to further validate the claim that certain communication practices are important for successful collaborative IORs.

A third limitation of this research was the limited access to informal interactions, behind-the-scenes conversations, and personal correspondences between collaboration members. The ethnographic methodology of this study did give me exposure to many aspects of communication outside formal meetings, and interview participants did give retrospective accounts of personal conversations. However, it was clear that there were many private negotiations and informal conversations happening outside the meetings I attended that had important implications on the development of the collaboration. It is not necessarily the case that these meetings are secretive or confidential (though some are); it is just that there are so many interactions happening in a collaboration this size that it is impossible for any one person to have access to all of them. Yet these conversations do play an important role in the development of collaboration, and it would be helpful to have more access to these interactions in order to better understand how communication shapes collaborative IORs.

Additionally, this research had limited access to the political and strategic motivations of collaboration members in the Community Action Network. Organizations do not join collaborations for simply altruistic reasons; they have additional motivations that will enable them to fulfill their missions and maintain the survival of the organization. Organizations may make strategic decisions to exercise limited participation or engage in free-rider behavior to help the organization accomplish certain short-term goals. Organizations may also utilize collaboration as a way to advance or

secure certain political interests. There is much to gain for some organizations if they are seen associating with certain collaborative partnerships, such as a community safety partnership or an educational coalition. Of course these organizations usually will not reveal these strategic and political motivations, they will say they want to help support the mission and vision of the collaboration. Yet these strategic and political motivations are important factors in collaboration, and this research would be enhanced by knowing how these factors influenced the decision-making processes of the Community Action Network.

A final limitation of this research involved the fact that the Community Action Network was involved in a substantial leadership transition during the ten months of my data collection. The original executive director of the Community Action Network recently retired after nine years of service. He was a unique individual who was especially positioned to do this type of work - he was a retired military office in a second career and he worked as a diplomat on several international assignments. Many people referred to him as a "legend in the community" and the city's collaboration awards are named after him. Needless to say, the new executive director had big shoes to fill. This may have affected the data I gathered because the CAN was in transition and spent a good deal of time re-defining the organization. I got the sense that I was observing the start of a new season for the CAN. This could limit the data because I may have been observing newer patterns of interactions, not examples of interactions that were more consistent over time.

Directions for Future Research

In addition to the important finding of the current project, this research also points to future directions for the development of organizational communication research in the context of collaborative IORs. One area that is ripe for an organizational communication perspective is the idea of "domain development" in collaborative IORs. The IOR literature discusses how a conceptual domain exists around interorganizational activity that indicates what issues will be addressed and what stakeholders are relevant, what Trist (1983) refers to as "field-related populations" (p. 273). Hardy and Philips (1998) explain further: "The development of an interorganizational domain is a process of social construction that enables stakeholders to communicate, to be identified and legitimated, and to acknowledge the problems they face" (p. 218). Given this socially constructed nature of IOR domains, it is important to understand the social processes that develop certain domains and how these interactions enable or constrain collective action. For example, is an IOR domain defined narrowly in order to exclude certain stakeholders or avoids certain measures of accountability? Conversely, is an IOR defined so broadly that it discourages progress? Leadership and participation are central aspects to the development of IOR domains because these communication processes create and solidify the conceptual understanding of a particular IOR domain for the relevant population. As Hardy and Phillips (1998) explain, "The ability to participate in domain development and to define the problems that characterize it, depends either on having the power to make oneself heard or on the goodwill of powerful domain members to allow low-power [stakeholders] to participate" (p. 227). An important future direction for this research is

to explore the role of leadership communication in the development of IOR domains and the participation practices that accompany this domain development.

A second future direction for this research entails looking at the "dark side" of collaboration. Keyton and Stallworth (2003) note that "collaborations are born of political aspirations and strategic motivations that cannot and should not be ignored" (p. 256). Despite the many positive connotations of collaboration, collaborative IORs can be sites for substantial political engagement and strategic manipulation. They are prone to free-rider problems (Cornes & Sandler, 1996) and paralyzing inactivity (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Some people in the nonprofit sector actively avoid collaboration because of perceived inefficiencies and ineffectiveness. There is a dark side to collaboration that needs to be explored in future research. In regards to leadership, future research should explore the way power is manifest discursively in collaboration and how this power may stifle certain aspects of collective action. Concerning participation, future research should investigate the communication practices of inauthentic participation and how certain messages may enable some collaboration members to sustain a nominal participation that can hurt the development of collaboration. Lastly, future research should examine the "communicative alternatives to collaboration" (Lewis, 2006, p. 231) that people may utilize in interorganizational relationships as they digress to the dark side.

A fourth area for future research from this project involves the role of communication in the "tipping point" (Gladwell, 2002) for collaboration. Several interview participants described the almost magical moment when random conversations

gain momentum towards collaboration and eventually solidify into an agreement between organizations to work together to achieve collective goals. Keyton and Stallworth (2003) talk about groups that are "on the verge of collaboration" (p. 235), but they do not go so far as to describe the point at which these groups transition from "on the verge" to "collaboration." Future research should seek to identify this "tipping point" for collaboration and the communication practices involved. Anecdotal evidence suggests that something happens in a conversation and the nature of interactions that moves organizations from potential to actual collaborators. The data from the present study imply that leadership communication and/or stakeholder participation may play an important role in this process. Are there certain things that people in leadership positions say that can initiate collaboration? Are there certain stakeholders that must participate (or not) in these conversations in order to move them towards collaboration? It seems as if there is a delicate balance between potential and actual collaboration, and practitioners and scholars alike would benefit from knowing more about how communication functions in this space to foster productive collaborative relationships between organizations.

Fifth, this research should continue exploring the relationship between individual, group, and organizational communication (micro-meso-macro). Most of the phenomena observed in this project happened between individuals at the group level, yet these groups were embedded within larger organizational structures. What can this multi-layered dynamic tell us about the nature of collaboration, organization, and communication? Early communication scholarship privileged individual interaction to infer group and

organization level understandings, such as Bales (1976) Interaction Processes Analysis. However, this quantitative rigor comes at the cost of missing the contextual and boundary spanning issues (Peterson, 2002). It also is a dualistic approach that misses the "pragmatic adjustments members make through their communicative responses to the dialectical tensions and exigencies of group life" (Johnson & Long, 2002, p. 31). More research needs to study collaborative interorganizational groups in order to better understand the dynamic interplay between micro, meso, and macro level communication phenomena.

A final area of future research involves the organizational conception of collaborative IORs. For the last several decades organizational studies has been dominated by a mechanistic view of the organization that is underwritten by Newtonian physics. Yet since the early nineties a growing body of research has been questioning this mechanistic assumption and instead exploring organizations from the perspective of complexity science (see McGuire, McKelvey, Mirabeau, & Oztas, 2006 for an overview). These scholars see organizations as complex adaptive systems, meaning they are comprised of dynamic, non-linear relationships that operate under conditions far from equilibrium and exhibit emergent properties through self-organization (Cilliers, 1998). This theoretical perspective highlights the importance of relationality and interaction among agents in an open system. Communication scholars can embrace this complexity view of organizing that emphasizes the contingency of outcomes based on social processes, in contrast to a mechanistic view of organizations that tends to be deterministic and views communication as mere information exchange and message transmission.

Future research is needed that starts from the assumption that collaborative IORs are complex adaptive systems, which can yield important insights about the role of communication in collaboration and might provide a better explanatory framework to understand the social phenomena that happen with organizations that form collaborative partnerships.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the communication processes of leadership and stakeholder participation in the context of interorganizational collaboration in order to advance our knowledge of interorganizational communication, especially in the nonprofit sector. The theoretical implication here is that we have a better understanding of the social infrastructure of collaborative partnerships in the nonprofit sector, especially the communication practices that enable organizational relationships to foster collective action between collaborators. Also, we have more knowledge about the communication challenges and tensions that exist in organizational partnerships where collaborative solutions are forged. In many ways this research raises more questions than it answers, so additional research is needed to understand other aspects of communication and collaborative IORs, especially the way in which collaborative domains are defined, the negative aspects of collaboration, the role of communication to initiate collaboration, and the theoretical underpinnings that inform our understanding of collaborative partnerships. Future research will expand these horizons for both theorists and practitioners wanting to learn more about how organizations form

collaborative partnerships to leverage resource and solve complex problems in our society.

Table 1 Empirical Research Findings Relevant to Leadership Communication

Bacon & Severson (1986)	Assertiveness, responsiveness, and versatility are significant predictors of leadership emergence in small groups.
Burke, (1974); Mullen, Salas, & Driskell, (1989); Regula & Julian, (1973); Skvoretz, (1988); Sorrentino & Boutillier, (1975)	Individuals who verbalize more in groups often emerge as leaders.
Downs & Pickett (1977)	Investigated the interaction effects of leadership style and people groupings and their influence on productivity and satisfaction; research supports a contingency model and the hypothesis that group compatibility and leadership style have a significant interaction.
Eblen (1987)	Leadership communication is an essential link to organizational commitment. The stylistic qualities and socially skilled communication of leaders helps predict how subordinates perceive the organization
Fairhurst & Chandler (1989)	Studied high, medium, and low leader-member exchanges (LMX) and found that influence in decision making and latitude (from Graen and Scandura's (1987) list of leader resources) developed during communication to differentiate among LMX relationships. They also highlight both differentiation and consistency in leadership communication within LMX relationships.
Fairhurst (1993)	Linked the social structural forms of the LMX model (high, medium, and low) to specific communication patterns and gender associations (aligning, accommodating, and polarizing), although there was not a one-to-one correspondence. Most high LMX relationships had both aligning and accommodating forms, medium LMX relationship had mostly accommodating and polarizing forms, and low LMX relationships displayed polarizing forms.

Table 1 (continued)	
Flauto's (1999)	In a multiple regression model, transformational leadership in LMX relationships was the best single predictor of communication competence; indicates that communication characteristics help differentiate between quality levels of leader-member exchanges.
Guastello, 1995	Emergent leaders suggest their own ideas and facilitate the creativity of others.
Hawkins (1992)	Only task-relevant communication is related to perceptions of emergent leadership in task-oriented small groups, regardless of gender.
Hawkins & Stewart (1990)	Initiating structure and consideration (leadership style) significantly influences state anxiety levels in task-oriented small groups, and this relationship does not appear to vary over time.
Johnson & Bechler, 1998	Emergent leaders listen more effectively than people who were not identified as emergent leaders.
Ketrow (1991)	Found that people who display procedurally-oriented behavior have the best chance of being acknowledged as the leader of a decision-making group, demonstrating that procedural communication can serve as an index of emergent leadership.
Limon & La France (2005)	Argumentativeness and communication apprehension both have significant effects on leadership; combined they are stronger predictors than either variable alone. Leadership emergence is not associated with verbal aggressiveness.
Schultz (1982)	Degrees of argumentativeness influence perceptions of leadership; highly argumentative people are rated as more influential in group decisions; extremely argumentative people have a disproportionate influence on group decisions.
Sheer & Chen (2003)	Found that leaders in Hong Kong received higher ratings on transformational leadership (from subordinates) the more frequently they used the company intranet; intranet use (vs. traditional media) to communicate with employees was the best predictor of transformational leadership ratings.

Table 1 (continued)	
Weinberg (1976)	Found three characteristics that signify group leadership: (1) target of most group discussion, (2) recognized by group as leader, and (3) major influence on group decisions; the communication factors that influenced this are openness, information, and persuasion.
Zorn (1991)	Found a moderate connection between construct system development and three of the four factors underlying transformational leadership, suggesting that communication theory informs leadership research by highlighting message and message construction abilities that leaders use to influence followers.
Zorn & Leichty (1991)	Reinterpret Situational Leadership Theory from a message analysis perspective, demonstrating that followers prefer positive face messages in the early and middle stages of their development, and autonomy-granting messages in later stages.

Table 2 Summary of Current Stakeholder Research Directions

Direction 1: Theoretical foundations and predictive aspects of stakeholder situations	
Friedman & Miles (2002, 2004)	Typology of stakeholder relations, 2x2 table of stakeholder labels - Compatible/incompatible - Necessary/contingent *Helps distinguish between stakeholders with either explicit or implicit contracts with the organization and whether those contracts are recognized or unrecognized*
Phillips (2003)	Stakeholder identification, distinguishes between normatively and derivatively legitimate stakeholders *Normative gain legitimacy because they are owed an obligation by the organization, derivative gain legitimacy because they can exert influence over normatively legitimate stakeholders*
Jawahar & McLaughlin (2001)	Descriptive stakeholder theory *Describe which stakeholders will be salient and connect stakeholder strategy within the context of organizational lifecycle, (startup, emerging/growth, maturity, decline/transition)…* *strategies of accommodation, defense, and reaction*
Rowley (1997)	Network theory of stakeholder influences *Model that provides a mechanism for conceptualizing concurrent influences of numerous stakeholders and predicting organizational responses*
Rowley & Moldoveanu (2003)	Interest/identity-based model of stakeholder group mobilization *Stakeholder groups more likely to act when other stakeholders with similar interests take action; overlapping identity between stakeholders reduces the probability that a stakeholder will act*
Polonsky & Scott (2005)	Determining stakeholder strategies based on ability to cooperate or threaten organizational outcomes *Empirical support of their strategy matrix suggests some universal strategies for dealing with stakeholders in all situations, as well as contingent strategies that depend on stakeholder influencing abilities*

Table 2 (Continued)

Direction 2: Stakeholder perspective as starting point/supplement for organizational scholarship	
Lewis, Hamel, & Richardson (2001)	Communicating organizational change to nonprofit stakeholders *Change implementation approaches based on perceived need for communication efficiency and perceived need for consensus building*
Lewis, Richardson, & Hamel (2003)	Communicative "stakes" during panned change in NPOs *Stakeholder resource importance as the basis for communicative attention, internal stakeholder receive more communicative attention than external*
Schneider (2002)	Stakeholder model of organizational leadership *Importance of leadership in managing stakeholder relationships in knowledge-based organizations*
Scott & Lane (2000)	Stakeholder approach to organizational identity *Organizational identity as emergent property from dynamic interactions among various stakeholders, both internal and external*
Hart & Sharma (2004)	Call for organizations to respond to fringe stakeholders *Attending to fringe stakeholders for the purpose of managing disruptive change and building future competitive business models*
Brickson (2005)	Connection between organizational identity and stakeholder relationships *Organizations have three distinct identities (individualistic, relational, collectivistic); variables of stakeholder relationships appear to be stronger predictors of organizational identity than organizational-level or individual-level variables*

Table 3 Recent Stakeholder Research Focusing on Communication

Patterson & Allen (1997)	How stakeholders respond to strategic communication of environmental activist organizations *Explored how various stakeholders perceived the legitimacy of impression management strategies (intimidation, justification, denouncement, diffusion of responsibility, bolstering, transcendence) following illegitimate actions of activist organizations*
Strong, Ringer, & Taylor (2001)	Role of trust in stakeholder satisfaction *Critical factors for stakeholder satisfaction are timeliness of communication, honesty and completeness of information, and empathy and equity of treatment by management*
Ulmer (2001)	Effective crisis management through established stakeholder relationships *Examines pre-crisis and post-crisis communication with stakeholders; importance of strong communication channels and positive value positions with stakeholders before crisis hits the organization*
Stephens, Malone, & Bailey (2005)	Communicating with stakeholders during a crisis *Integration of crisis-communication strategies and stakeholder theory; soliciting forgiveness and public approval the primary message; different messages targeted to different stakeholders*
Morsing (2006)	Role of corporate communication as means of linking external and internal stakeholders *Connection between member identification and strategic corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication via external stakeholders; auto-communication theory*

APPENDIX A

Community Action Network Organizational Structure

CAN Partners	CAN Planning Bodies	CAN Issue Area Groups
Austin Area Human Services Association	Administrative Team	Aging Services Council
Austin Area Research Organization	Assessment & Planning Committee	Basic Needs Coalition
Austin Independent School District	Community Council	Behavioral Health Planning Partnership
Austin Area Interreligious Ministries	Executive Committee	Central Texas After School Network
Austin-Travis County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Center	Marketing Committee	Child and Youth Mental Health Planning Partnership
Capital Metro	Resource Council	Developmental Disabilities Planning Partnership
City of Austin		Early Care and Education Planning Group
Community Justice Council		Homeless Task Force
Great Austin Chamber of Commerce		The Literacy Coalition of Central Texas
Health Partnership 2010		Ready by 21 Coalition
Higher Education Coalition		Re-Entry Roundtable
Travis County		Victims Services Task Force
Travis County Healthcare District		Workforce Development
United Way Capital Area		
WorkSource		

APPENDIX B

Community Action Network Meeting Observations

Date	Meeting	Time	Location	Hours
3/9/2007	CAN Resource Council	1:00-3:00	City Hall	2
3/9/2007	Community Council Planning Mtng	3:30-4:30	City Hall	1
3/20/2007	Marketing Committee	2:00-4:00	United Way	2
3/22/2007	Assessment & Planning	3:00-4:45	Greenlights	1.75
3/28/2007	Issue Area Group	1:30-4:00	WorkSource	1.5
4/2/2007	A-Team	3:00-4:45	United Way	1.75
4/13/2007	Resource Council	1:00-2:45	City Hall	1.75
4/16/2007	Community Council	5:30-7:45	City Hall	2.25
4/17/2007	Marketing Committee	2:00-3:30	United Way	1.5
4/26/2007	Assessment & Planning	3:00-5:00	Greenlights	2
5/7/2007	A-Team	3:00-5:00	United Way	2
5/10/2007	Community Dvlpmnt Comm	6:30-7:30	City Hall	1
5/15/2007	Marketing Committee	2:00-3:30	United Way	1.5
5/21/2007	Community Council	5:30-7:30	City Hall	2
5/24/2007	Assessment & Planning	3:00-4:30	Greenlights	1.5
6/1/2007	A-team ad hoc (forum planning)	1:30-3:30	Palm Square	2
6/4/2007	A-team	3:00-4:45	United Way	1.75
6/8/2007	Resource Council	1:00-2:45	City Hall	1.75
6/18/2007	Community Council	5:30-7:30	City Hall	2
7/16/2007	Community Council	5:00-7:30	City Hall	2.5
7/25/2007	Issue Area Group	1:30-3:45	WorkSource	2.25
7/30/2007	A-team ad hoc (forum planning)	3:00-4:00	Palm Square	1
8/10/2007	Resource Council	1-2:45	City Hall	1.75
8/20/2007	Community Council	5:15-7:45	City Hall	2.5
8/24/2007	Executive Committee	8:30-11:30	WorkSource	3
9/10/2007	A-team/Assessment & Planning	3:00-5:15	United Way	2.25
9/14/2007	Resource Council	1:30-3:45	City Hall	2.25
9/17/2007	Community Council	5:30-7:45	City Hall	2.25
9/26/2007	Issue Area Group	1:30-3:30	WorkSource	2
9/28/2007	Executive Committee	8:30-10:30	Palm Square	2
11/5/2007	A-team	3:00-4:30	United Way	1.5
11/9/2007	Resource Council	1:00-3:00	City Hall	2
11/28/2007	Issue Area Group	1:30-3:30	WorkSource	2
11/14/2007	Resource Council	1:00-3:00	City Hall	2
12/14/2007	End of Year Celebration	3:30-5:00	City Hall	1.5

APPENDIX C

Interview Participants

#	Pseudonym	Home Organization	Position in the CAN
1	Hector	Community Action Network	Staff
2	Sylvia	Indigent Care Collaboration	Community Council
3	Marcia	WorkSource	Resource Council
4	Wilson	Seaton Medical	Resource Council
5	Jennifer	Austin Area research Organization	Resource Council
6	Adria	Austin Area research Organization	Administrative Team
7	Lucas	Political Asylum Project	Victim Services Task Force
8	Meredith	Travis County Healthcare District	Marketing Committee
9	Lisa	Indigent Care Collaboration	Administrative Team
10	Daniel	United Way	Resource Council
11	Scott	Mental Health & Mental Retardation Center	Resource Council
12	Jose	Skill Point	Assessment & Planning Committee
13	Lucille	Mental Health & Mental Retardation Center	Resource Council
14	Margaret	Strauss Institute	Community Council
15	Isabella	Capital Metro	Resource Council
16	Jonathan	St. David's Foundation	Resource Council
17	Richard	Private accountant	Resource Council
18	Rebecca	Austin Area Interreligious Ministries	Administrative Team
19	Gary	Community Action Network	Staff
20	Gena	City of Austin	Community Council
21	Jocelyn	Travis County Attorney's Office	Marketing Committee
22	Rachel	WorkSource	Resource Council
23	Michael	Vaugh House	Ready by 21
24	George	Private architect	Community Council

APPENDIX C

Interview Participants (continued)

#	Pseudonym	Home Organization	Position in the CAN
25	Amanda	Austin Groups for the Elderly	Aging Services Taskforce
26	Joy	Travis County	Resource Council
27	Alan	Travis County	Resource Council
28	Ashley	Austin Independent School District	Resource Council
29	Nick	Easter Seals	Resource Council
30	Katherine	Austin Academy	Behavioral Health Planning Partnership
31	Steven	Austin Area Human Services Association	Resource Council, Basic Needs Coalition
32	Erin	UT School of Nursing	Community Council
33	Jackie	Austin Community Foundation	Resource Council
34	Joshua	Austin Independent School District	Resource Council
35	Johanna	Austin Chamber of Commerce	Resource Council
36	Lisa	Seaton Medical	Resource Council
37	Jamie	Literacy Coalition	Interest Area Groups
38	Julie	United Way	Administrative Team
39	Lacey	Easter Seals	Resource Council
40	Kelly	Austin Independent School District	Community Council
41	Lucinda	Area Agency on Aging	Aging Services Council
42	Shelly	Private doctor	Children's Partnership
43	Shane	Family Connections	Homelessness Taskforce
44	Charles	WorkSource	Ready by 21
45	Roberto	City of Austin	Community Council, Executive Committee
46	Laura	Community Action Network	Staff
47	Betsy	Travis County	Resource Council
48	Tonya	Travis County	Administrative Team
49	Nicole	City of Austin	Assessment & Planning Committee

APPENDIX C

Interview Participants (continued)

#	Pseudonym	Home Organization	Position in the CAN
50	Martha	Austin Area Research Organization	Administrative Team
51	Becky	City of Austin	Resource Council
52	Allison	Travis County Healthcare District	Resource Council
53	Brian	City of Austin	Resource Council

APPENDIX D

Interview Guide

Background

(1) What is the nature of the relationship between the CAN and the organization you work for?

- Your current role?
- Your tenure at your organization?

(2) How long has your organization been a part of the CAN (assuming there is a formal relationship between your organization and the CAN)?

(3) Describe your involvement in the CAN (or a particular issue area group).

- Subcommittee(s)?
- Previous responsibilities in CAN (such as an issue area group)?
- Tenure?
- Other representatives from your organization besides you?

Leadership

(4) What is leadership in the CAN?

(5) Tell me a story about good/bad leadership in the CAN.

(6) In your opinion, who is the leader(s) of [insert issue area group]?

- Why? What do they say/do that makes them a leader?
- Do they have a formal position in this interest area group?
- How does he/she communicate in committee meetings?

(7) Is there anyone in the interest area group who is particularly influential, but does not have a formal leadership position?

- What makes them influential?

Participation

(8) How do you participate in the CAN?

(9) What does participation in collaboration mean to you?

(10) Tell me a story about good/bad participation in the CAN.

(11) What problems have you noticed regarding participation?

(12) Would you like to participate differently? Does anything prevent you from doing this?

(13) How do you represent your interests in collaboration?

APPENDIX E

Summary of Data Coding Categories

Conceptual Categories	Sub-Categories	Sample Quote or Incident	Page # (I=interview F=fieldnotes)	Interviewee (Pseudonym) or Meeting
Collaborative Leadership				
	Casting Vision	It requires someone who's got a vision larger than their own organization…It's got to be someone who has that vision and who can engage others in both creating that vision and moving that vision forward.	p. 215 (I)	Laura
	Translating	I've seen your mission. Tell me what that means in reality on a day to day basis.	p. 379 (I)	Lucas
	Asking	Not being ashamed to ask questions – which means you're showing some ignorance. But that's okay. Many times the questions you ask are questions that other folks already had and they were reluctant to ask or didn't think to ask or forgot to ask. It also helps asking questions because it gets folks thinking…who thought we've already got this locked down, and you ask a question that's relevant that has them say, "Oh I hadn't thought about that." So it expands everyone's horizons.	p. 340 (I)	Wilson
	Listening	I was the CEO of the [a national healthcare organization] for 8 years. I've been a CEO of a non-profit, executive director of another non-profit. I've been in leadership roles for awhile. And leadership, in a collaboration is some of the most difficult leadership there is…It takes great diplomacy. It takes being a very good listener	p. 393 (I)	Meredith

Authentic Participation				
	Voice	For many people it's about needing to feel like they have a say	p. 320 (I)	Sylvia
	Opportunity	I think for me personally, as someone serving on the Resource Council, I want to be sure that I'm given the opportunity [to make a difference]	p. 92 (I)	Lisa
	Contribution	What I talk about with participation is that somebody is there and providing input – isn't just there… So at a conceptual level, the idea of a participant is somebody who actually participates in it, rather than just sitting back going, "Mm-hmm…okay," and being indifferent to it	p. 182 (I)	Shane
	Commitment	It means be committed to what the collaboration is about and its mission, or don't go…Collaboration means being committed to just that. If you're not committed to what the purpose of the collaboration is, or you're only there for your own self interest, it's not collaboration	p. 377 (I)	Lucas
Communicative Tensions				
	Focus/ inclusion	[Collaboration is all about] the capacity to attract people, the capacity to keep a table that is inclusive./ I think there are so many issues that if we're not focused, we won't address any of the issues very effectively.	p. 305/ p. 18 (I)	Hector/ Katherine
	Talk/action	I think collaborations easily become about process, process, process and they forget entirely why they are there and you spend a tremendous amount of time on process and little gets done. /A perfect product is a failure without a perfect process.	p. 50/ p. 276 (I)	Jackie/ Becky
	Sector discourses	One of the big challenges for the CAN is speaking with different audiences. The business community 'hears' things differently than the nonprofit community…so do politicians and other government agencies.	p. 5 (F)	Daniel
Problematic Representation				
	Balancing interests	What I usually see, is when they should be representing [their collaboration], they'll represent their agency. They'll speak for [the collaboration], but they're really only speaking out of the	p. 101 (I)	Jamie

Problematic Representation (continued)		experience of their organization and not thinking about the network of people		
	Meeting minutes	Meeting minutes not accurately representing the interaction from a previous meeting.	p. 19 (F)	Community Council
	Liaisons	The liaison from the Administrative Team did not accurately represent their meeting to the Resource Council.	p. 58 (F)	Resource Council
	Invited presentations	Presenters do not advocate for specific interests or request anything in particular.	p. 74 (F)	Resource Council
Identity Construction & Negotiation				
	Awareness of self & others	You have to be aware that people could perceive your entity a certain way just because of the kind of entity they are. We're a governmental entity. We're a taxing authority. We're a policy setting organization. So I have to keep that in my mindset when I'm talking to folks because I may be relating to them just one on one executive to executive, but I always represent my organization… I have to remember - or to be mindful - of how others might be perceiving me in my role in this [collaboration].	p. 286	Allison
	Qualification	I present this framework as wearing many different hats... part of the Executive Council, a representative from a Community Action Network partner organization, part of the Administrative Team, but especially as a concerned citizen. I really want you to hear me as that.	p. 71 (F)	Rebecca
	Interaction & self-disclosure	So, my view of that person is based on what I know that they are trying to accomplish. But as soon as I find out that she was a mother and a wife and has teenage boys and one of them is in trouble and they are at that congregation in the Jewish community and has a hobby of competitive running - then they become more and more and more a real person. So, over time, in those kinds of settings, everyone began to be acquainted with each other in a more full way.	p. 609 (I)	George

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